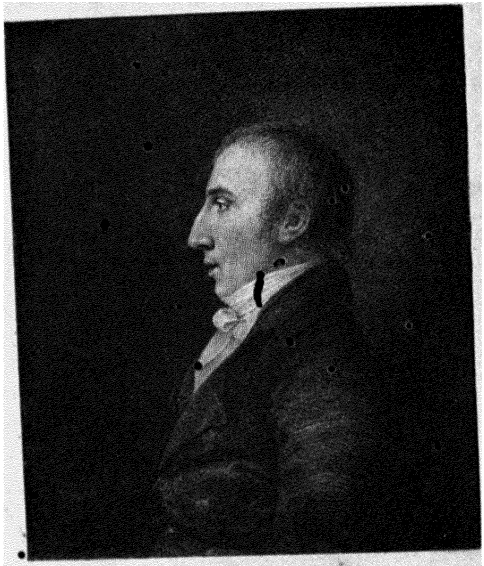

W. Wordsworth

Walker & Boutall sc A

LYRICAL BALLADS

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

AND S. T. COLERIDGE

1798

EDITED WITH CERTAIN POEMS OF 1798

AND AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY THOMAS HUTCHINSON

SECOND EDITION

LONDON

DUCKWORTH AND CO

1907

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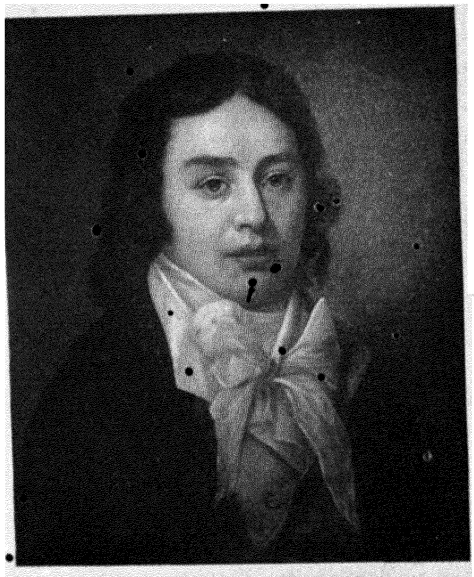

S. T. Coleridge

Tho. Fox & Bentall sc.

INTRODUCTION.

THE little book here reprinted appeared at Bristol on or about the first of September 1798. A small octavo of two hundred and fourteen pages, humbly put up in paper boards, it came from the house of Joseph Cottle, bootaster, printer, publisher, and bookseller: anonymously, and without a hint, either in title-page, advertisement, contents-table, or body of the book, to reveal the presence of more than one hand. The book was the work of two friends, William Wordsworth, then twenty-eight, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, then twenty-five years of age; and the contents, for the most part, were an experiment to see how far the public taste would endure verse of an absolutely natural and simple kind—verse that totally discarded the hackneyed artifices of poetic style, and employed such words only as were common in everyday speech. Both writers had already come forward with work of a very different kind: Wordsworth in 1793,

with two descriptive poems in heroic metre, of great and original merit, but written in the vicious style of Erasmus Darwin; and Coleridge (amongst other things) with a volume (1796) of miscellaneous verse (now in a second edition), reminiscent chiefly of Gray, Collins, and Akenside. For this reason, and because they craved beyond everything a free and unbiassed opinion from the public, they now endeavoured to ensure, so far as they could, the anonymity of their latest venture. The *Ballads*, as originally put together in the summer of 1798, had included *Lewti, or The Circassian Love-Chant*, a lyric which had appeared in the *Morning Post* of April 13 over the signature *Nicius Erythræus*, but was known to many besides Dan. Stuart, the editor, as the work of Coleridge. At the last moment the sheet (E) containing this piece was cancelled, and *The Nightingale*, a newly composed idyl in blank verse, put in its place. And the same motive that prompted the rejection of *Lewti* possibly led to the adoption of what seems to have been the original imprint. Fired with the ambition of ushering into the world three such poets as Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth—a rare distinction, as he justly observes,[1] for a

[1] *Early Recollections*, i. p. 309.

provincial publisher—Cottle, who seems to have forgotten the existence of the Poems of 1793, had purchased from Wordsworth the copyright of *Lyrical Ballads* for the sum of £30—the amount he had before paid to Coleridge and Southey for the rights of their several first volumes. Cottle's name, therefore, and not another's, must in the ordinary course have appeared as that of the publisher on the title-page. But Cottle's dealings with Coleridge,[1] which were 'extensive and peculiar,' and went back to 1795, had by 1798 become a matter of common notoriety; and it may have been feared that the announcement of Cottle's name in this connection would put the readers of *Lyrical Ballads* in possession of too strong a clue to the authorship. However this may have been it is remarkable that in the volume from Southey's library, now in the British Museum, in which the cancelled contents-table and the leaves (pp. 63-67) containing *Lewti* are bound up with an ordinary copy of *Lyrical Ballads*, the imprint

[1] *E.g.*: 'Cottle has entered into an engagement to give me a guinea and a half for every hundred lines of poetry I write, which will be perfectly sufficient for my maintenance, I only amusing myself in the mornings - and all my prose works he is eager to purchase.'—*Life of S. T. Coleridge* (Dykes Campbell), p. 47, *note*.

on the title-page runs: 'Bristol: Printed by Biggs and Cottle, For T. N. Longman, Paternoster-row, London. 1798.' So well, it may be added, was the secret of the partnership preserved, that more than a year later a writer in the *British Critic* (October 1799) is found conjecturally assigning the entire contents of the volume to Coleridge, who, he observes, is 'confidently said to be the writer of the *Ancyent Marinere*.' Again, in the annual *Retrospect of Domestic Literature* given in the *Monthly Magazine*, December 1798 (vol. vi. *suppl.*, p. 514), there occurs the following brief notice of *Lyrical Ballads*, which shows that the editor, Dr. John Aiken, had up to that time learned nothing of the dual authorship of the book: 'The author has attempted to imitate the style of our old English versifiers with unusual success; *The Auncient Mariners* [*sic*], however, on which he particularly prides himself, is in our opinion a particular exception. Some of his pieces are beautiful, but others are stiff and laboured.' Lastly, in Melmoth's *Beauties of British Poetry*, published in 1801—nay, even in the third edition issued in 1807—*Goody Blake and Harry Gill* appears amongst the anonymous pieces. We may conclude, then, that up to the date of the announce-

ment of Wordsworth's name on the title-page, and the implication of Coleridge's in the *Preface*, of the second edition (January 1801), neither the authors' names, nor even the fact of the dual authorship, had become generally known.

Lyrical Ballads appeared, as we said, on or near September 1. On the 16th the poets started for Germany, and thus escaped the chagrin of seeing their experiment decried in the *Critical Review* (October 1798) by one who, if he could find nothing to commend therein, ought to have held his peace. Robert Southey had quarrelled with Coleridge over the collapse of Pantisocracy in November 1794; and though, after Southey's return from Portugal, the brothers-in-law had apparently resumed their earlier footing of friendship, Coleridge felt that perfect confidence was no longer his to give, while Southey seems to have nursed feelings of rancour and suspicion towards his old comrade.[1] Coleridge's precipitate praise of Wordsworth, too!—his way of referring to Wordsworth as 'the only man to whom *at all times* and *in all modes of excellence* I feel myself inferior'—must

[1] The two had met in the autumn of 1795 at the Bristol house of Mr. Pinney of Racedown, and already, by May 1796, Wordsworth had become 'a very dear friend of mine who is, in my opinion, the best poet of the age.'—S. T. C.'s *Letters*, p. 163.

have proved peculiarly exasperating to one who believed in his heart that not a living poet of them all was worthy to tie the shoestrings of Robert Southey. The unhappy epileptic Charles Lloyd, and even, in a slight degree, the kindly, tolerant Charles Lamb, shared Southey's jealous impatience of Coleridge's latest Oracle; with the result that in the autumn of 1797 the three malcontents drew off from Coleridge, and formed an *entente cordiale* for the purpose of maintaining a free republic of the poets. And now his evil genius inspired Coleridge to write and send to the *Monthly Magazine* (Nov. 1797) those unlucky *jeux d'esprit*, the *Nehemiah Higginbottom* Sonnets. They were written, as must surely be evident to any candid reader, in playful travesty of the doleful *pathos*, the affected *simplicity*, and the turgid *sublimity* respectively exhibited in their joint volume of 1797 by Lamb, Lloyd, and Coleridge himself.[1] But Southey, in whom vanity had engendered a morbid habit of suspicion, conceived that Coleridge had, in the Sonnet on *Simplicity* (No. II.), designed to parody *his* earlier verses; and notwithstanding Coleridge's

[1] 'There is a luxury in self-dispraise,' says Wordsworth (*Excursion*, iv. 175). A luxury, surely, which no one ever enjoyed more heartily or more frequently than S. T. C.!

disavowal and earnest expostulation—despite, too, the words, 'Tis true on Lady Fortune's gentlest pad I amble on,' words which point unmistakably to Lloyd—he not only persisted in his opinion but won Lamb over to his side. And when Coleridge wrote to Lamb expressly denying that his Sonnet was composed with reference to Southey, Lamb replied that 'It was a lie too gross for the grossest ignorance to believe.'[1]

In the summer of 1798 Southey settled at Westbury, a village two miles distant from Bristol. No doubt he, as well as James Tobin—'Dear brother Jim'—got sight of the proof-sheets of *Lyrical Ballads* as they were preparing for press; no doubt, too, it occurred to him that here was a good opportunity to bring two puffed-up bards to a sense of their natural dimensions. The promptitude with which he applied the rod (in the *Critical Review*, October 1798) suggests that he had had it in pickle for some time before the *corpus delicti* appeared. It is significant that Cottle, who had purchased the copyright of *Lyrical Ballads* for £30, transferred the greater part—practically the whole—of the impression of 500 'at a loss' to J. and A. Arch of Gracechurch Street, *within the fortnight following the day*

[1] S. T. C.'s *Letters*, p. 251.

of publication (Sept. 1). Why was this? Cottle, writing in 1847, says, in consequence of the 'heavy sale' of the book; but one week was too short a time to allow for judging of the sale, and the negotiations with Arch must have taken at least another week. Cottle adds that Wordsworth wrote to him from London on September 15, requesting him to make over his interest in the *Lyrical Ballads* to Johnson[1] of St. Paul's Churchyard. From this it would seem that Cottle's dissatisfaction with the book had become known to Wordsworth, who thereupon had resolved, if possible, to relieve him of it. It may be that Southey, who would naturally be reluctant to hurt Cottle in the pocket, had by his criticisms convinced the bookseller of the hopelessness of Wordsworth's 'experiment,' and induced him to part with the impression on the best terms procurable. (But see *Bibliogr. Note.*) He would thus be enabled without injury to Cottle to speak out in the *Critical Review*. His article in that magazine—in which Arch is named as the publisher—is not, perhaps,

[1] Johnson had published the *Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* of 1793. Coleridge now (Sept. 10-16, 1798) arranged with Johnson for the printing of the little quarto which contains *Fears in Solitude*, *France, an Ode*, and *Frost at Midnight*.

deliberately unfair to Wordsworth—it is not a sweeping condemnation of the entire volume. Still, it does pronounce sentence of failure upon the *experimental* poems, that is, upon all except the *Yew-Tree* lines, the *Female Vagrant*, *Tintern Abbey*, and the scenes from *Osorio*. 'The experiment, we think, has failed, not because the language of conversation is little adapted to "the purposes of poetic pleasure," but because it has been tried upon uninteresting subjects.' *The Convict* and *The Last of the Flock* are censured by name. *The Idiot Boy* 'resembles a Flemish picture in the worthlessness of its design and the excellence of its execution.' The other ballads are 'as bald in story,' and are 'not so highly embellished in narration. With that which is entitled *The Thorn* we were altogether displeased. . . The author should have recollected that he who personates tiresome loquacity becomes tiresome himself.' But in dealing with *The Ancyent Marinere* Southey clearly betrays prejudice. 'Many of the stanzas are laboriously beautiful, but in connection they are absurd or unintelligible. Our readers may exercise their ingenuity in attempting to unriddle what follows ['The roaring wind . . . gave a groan.' *Ancyent Marinere*, ll. 301-322.

pp. 13, 14]. We do not sufficiently understand the story to analyse it. It is a Dutch attempt at German sublimity. 'Genius has here been employed in producing a poem of little merit.'

Southey, cautious to avoid betraying his identity, does not hint at the joint authorship. Cottle, however, found him out, and in August 1799 wrote to inform Wordsworth, then at Stockton-on-Tees. Wordsworth merely replied that 'if Southey could not conscientiously have spoken differently of the volume he ought to have declined the task of reviewing it; for he knew that Wordsworth had published for money alone, and that money was of importance to him.' Coleridge, when the story reached him, relieved himself, as he had done on discovering Lloyd's treacheries in *Edmund Oliver*, by inditing an *Epigram*,[1] and forthwith dismissed the incident from his mind. And a month or two later on, when Southey was putting together the *Annual Anthology* for 1800, Coleridge not only furnished him with a goodly sheaf of original verse, but

[1] *To a critic who had extracted a passage from a poem without adding a word respecting the context, and then derided it as unintelligible:*

Most candid critic, what if I,
By way of joke, pull out your eye

exerted himself strenuously to obtain contributions to the *Anthology* from *Perdita* Robinson and others.[1]

The one meagre and perfunctory notice accorded to the *Ballads* in Richard Phillips's *Monthly Magazine* contains an unflattering reference to the *Ancyent Marinere*. This notice has been already quoted. A reviewer in the *Analytical*

> And, holding up the fragment, cry
> 'Ha! ha! that men such fools should be!'
> Behold this shapeless Dab!—and he
> Who own'd it, fancied it could see!'
> The joke were mighty analytic,
> But should you like it, candid critic?

(This Epigram appeared in the *Morning Post*, Dec. 16, 1801.) On Sept. 5, 1798, Southey wrote to William Taylor of Norwich: 'Have you seen a volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, etc.? They are by Coleridge and Wordsworth, but their names are not affixed. Coleridge's *Ballad of the Ancyent Marinere* is, I think, the clumsiest attempt at German sublimity I ever saw. Many of the others are very fine; and some I shall re-read upon the same principle that led me through Trissino, whenever I am afraid of writing like a child or an old woman.' If the reader would know what Southey's notion was at this time of a fit subject for poetic treatment, let him turn to *The Grandmother's Tale. An English Eclogue.*

[1] Lamb, albeit estranged for the time from Coleridge, was displeased with Southey's critique and told him so: 'I am sorry you are so sparing of praise to the *Ancyent Marinere*. . . . You have selected a passage fertile in unmeaning miracles, but have passed by fifty passages as miraculous as the images they celebrate. . . . You allow some elaborate beauties: you should have extracted 'em.'—*Letters* (Ainger), i. 95 96.

of the same date (Dec. 1798) takes his cue from the Aristarchus of the *Critical* of October: 'We are not pleased with it,' he writes, of Coleridge's marvellous ballad: 'in our opinion it has more of the extravagance of a mad German poet than of the simplicity of our ancient ballad writers.' He praises and quotes *The Nightingale*, however; and of Wordsworth's work he quotes *Goody Blake* in full, and warmly commends *The Thorn*, *The Idiot Boy*, and *The Mad Mother*—a choice which Wordsworth himself would have approved. In May 1799 there appeared in Griffith's *Monthly Review* a critique of the poems, which on the whole is fairly appreciative, though the writer is careful to explain that the result of the 'experiment' is not such as to justify the abandonment of 'the sweet and polished measures of Dryden, Pope, and Gray' for the rude numbers of our elder ballad-writers. We should lose, instead of gaining, by such a 'retrogradation.' 'None but savages have submitted to eat acorns after corn was found. We will allow that our author has the art of cooking his acorns well and that he makes a very palatable dish of them for *gours maigres*,' etc. 'The author shall style his rustic delineations of low-life *poetry*, if he pleases, on the same principle on which Butler

is called a poet and Teniers a painter; but is the doggerel of the one equal to the sublime numbers of a Milton, or are the Dutch boors of the other to be compared with the angels of Raphael or Guido?' ['Who would not have lamented if Corregio (*sic*) or Rafaelle (*sic*) had wasted their talents in painting Dutch boors or the humours of a Flemish wake?'—Southey in *Critical Review*, Oct. 1798.] 'When we confess that our author has had the art of pleasing and interesting in no common way by his natural delineation of human passions, characters, and incidents, we must add that these effects were not produced by the *poetry*; we have been as much affected by pictures of misery and unmerited distress in *prose*.' *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* is 'the strangest story of a cock and bull that we ever saw on paper . . . it seems a rhapsody of unintelligible wildness and incoherence . . . there are, however, in it poetical touches of an exquisite kind.' The critic detects a *Rousseauish* strain in several of the pieces—in the *Yew-Tree* and *Tintern Abbey*, for instance; he expostulates with the author for adopting a tone of peevish discontent with society and its institutions—in the *Female Vagrant*, *The Last of the Flock*, *The Dungeon*, *The Convict*, and *The True Story of*

Goody Blake (the critic probably suspected Coleridge to be the author of the whole volume); but he accords the highest praise to *The Idiot Boy* and *The Mad Mother*. Of the latter he says: 'Admirable painting! in Michael Angelo's bold and masterly manner'; while opposite *The Thorn* he merely sets the note: 'All our author's pictures, in colouring, are dark as those of Rembrandt or Spagnoletto'. Finally, of the poems generally, he observes: 'Style and versification are those of our ancient ditties; but much polished, and more constantly excellent. In old songs we have only a fine line or stanza now and then: here we meet with few that are feeble—but it is *poesie larmoiante* (*sic*). The author is more plaintive than Gray himself.'

On the whole, it may be said, this review was as well adapted to attract book-buyers to the *Ballads* as Southey's was to scare them away. Accordingly, we find that by the end of July, 1799, Cottle was able to give a good account of the sale to Wordsworth, then sojourning with the Hutchinsons at Sockburn-on-Tees. Whether the story reported by Allsop from the mouth of Coleridge: 'I was told by Longman that the greater part of the *Lyrical Ballads* had been sold

to seafaring men who, having heard of the Ancient Mariner, concluded that it was a naval song-book'—whether this comical story had any foundation in fact, or whether it was just a *bam* perpetrated by the worthy Longman on the poet (or, haply, by the poet himself upon his solemn friend?), it is impossible to say. Certain it is that *Lyrical Ballads* eventually 'sold much better than the Wordsworths had expected, and was liked by a much greater number of people.'—Dorothy to Mrs. Marshall, Sept. 10, 1800.[1] This result, as we have seen, was facilitated by the critique in the *Monthly Review*; it must have been still more effectually expedited by an article which appeared in the *British Critic* of October 1799—the last which calls for notice here. We know from Coleridge that Wrangham was a regular contributor to the *British Critic*; and there are signs in the article which point to Wrangham as the writer. We select a few sentences:

'The attempt made in this little volume is one that meets our cordial approbation; and it is an attempt by no means unsuccessful. The author's endeavour is to recall our poetry from the fantastical excess of

[1] Knight's *Life of William Wordsworth*, i. 212.

refinement to simplicity and nature. . . . In these poems we do not often find expressions that we esteem too familiar or deficient in dignity; on the contrary, we think that in general the author has attained that judicious degree of simplicity which accommodates itself with ease even to the sublime. It is not by pomp of words, but by energy of thought, that the sublime is most successfully achieved; and we infinitely prefer the simplicity even of the most unadorned tale in this volume to all the meretricious frippery of the Darwinian taste. . . . The *Ancyent Marinere* has many excellencies and many faults. The beginning and end are striking and well conducted, but the intermediate part is too long, and has in some places a kind of confusion of images which deprives it of all effect from not being intelligible. [The writer assigns the entire volume to Coleridge: see *Ancyent Marinere*, 1. 60, *note*.] All the poems have merit, and many among them a very high rank of merit, which our feelings respecting some parts of the supposed author's character do not authorise or incline us to deny. [*The Female Vagrant*, *The Nightingale*, *The Thorn*, and *The Mad Mother* are chosen for special praise.] *The Idiot Boy*, though it descends quite to common life, is yet animated by much interest and told with singular felicity. *The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman* we quote in full for its pathos, and for its novel and effective imagery. . . . After all we have said, there are other poems and detached passages that well deserve attention and commendation; nor does there appear any offensive mixture of enmity to present institutions except in one or two instances, which are so unobtrusive as hardly to deserve notice.'

Such are the most important critical notices evoked by the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798. It is clear that of these one only—that which appeared latest of all, in the *British Critic*, October 1799—was penned in full and intelligent sympathy with the novel 'experiment.' Southey, who at this time was writing on humble themes in an absolutely simple style, might have spoken sympathetically—might have dwelt on the merits, rather than the faults, of the volume; but Southey suffered the mists of malice and bitterness to obscure his judgment, with the pitiful result that he stands self-pilloried as the critic who could see in the *Rime of the Ancyent Marinere* only 'a Dutch attempt at German sublimity.'

The most remarkable feature indeed in these four reviews is their unanimous tone of disparagement towards Coleridge's magnificent ballad. This may perhaps be partly set down to the force of example. But it may have been also the result, in part, of honest inability to appreciate a grand and novel work of art. 'Every great and original writer'—the observation is Coleridge's, reported more than once by Wordsworth—'in proportion as he is great or original must himself create the taste by

which he is to be relished; he must teach the art by which he is to be seen: so has it been, so will it continue to be. The predecessors of an original genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road: he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.'[1] 'The commonest quality,'

[1] *Essay Supplementary to Preface.* Wordsworth: *Poems*, ed. 1815, i. 368.—In the curiously frank note on the *Ancyent Marinere* which, with Coleridge's knowledge and consent, Wordsworth inserted in the second (1800) edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, there are some strictures which serve to illustrate the striking contrast in genius and moral frame presented by the two poet-friends. While admitting the true and delicate touches of passion, the wealth of beautiful imagery, and the harmony and artful variety of the versification, Wordsworth finds four 'great defects' in his colleague's ballad: 'first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession as Mariner, or as a human being who, having been long under controul of supernatural impressions, might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural [strange! that Wordsworth could not see how this indistinctness really belongs in a faulty degree to *his* retired skipper of *The Thorn*, whereas in the *Ancyent Marinere* it is, if not a beautiful, certainly a necessary feature]; secondly, that he does not act, but is continually acted upon; thirdly, that the events, having no necessary connection, do not produce each other [objections which are met by simply quoting the title of 1800: The Ancient Mariner: *A Poet's Reverie*]; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated.' Let us confess at once that this deplorable criticism serves

says Carlyle somewhere, 'in a true work of art, if its excellence have any depth and compass, is that at first sight it occasions a certain disappointment—perhaps even, mingled with its undeniable beauty, a certain feeling of aversion.'

but to indicate the moral and artistic limitations of the critic. Wordsworth, serenely self-involved, shows towards the susceptibilities of his partner an indifference which shocks and repels us. It must be allowed that Wordsworth suffered from the defects of his great qualities of head and heart: he could

> '. . . see a World in a grain of sand
> And a Heaven in a wild flower,
> Hold Infinity in the palm of his hand
> And Eternity in an hour.'

But he could not write he even fails how to grasp the conditions of success in writing a romantic ballad of *gramarye*. On the other hand, Coleridge, while stedfastly declining to acknowledge publicly, did yet in 1798 admit and deplore in confidence the limitations of Wordsworth's poetic genius. 'Coleridge lamented,' writes Hazlitt, 'that Wordsworth was not prone enough to believe in the traditional superstitions of the place, and that there was a something corporeal, a *matter-of-factness*, a clinging to the palpable, or often to the petty, in his poetry, in consequence. His genius was not a spirit that descended to him through the air; it sprung out of the ground like a flower, or unfolded itself like a green spray, on which the goldfinch sang.' This, adds Hazlitt, Coleridge intended to apply to Wordsworth's descriptive, not to his philosophic poetry; 'which latter,' he said, 'had a grand and comprehensive spirit in it, so that his soul seemed to inhabit the universe like a palace, and to discover truth by intuition, rather than by deduction.'—*My First Acquaintance with Poets* [in May 1798]. Wordsworth's view of the matter is presented in the Prologue to *Peter Bell*, ll. 136-155.

Wordsworth, in the *Advertisement* of 1798, announces the *Lyrical Ballads*—as distinguished from the *Few Other Poems* (see title-page) in the book—as an *experiment*; 'they are written and printed, that is, to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted for the purposes of poetic pleasure.' This is badly expressed; and Wordsworth in 1800, and again in 1802 and 1805, tried to improve upon it. In 1805 (*Preface*) instead of 'the language of conversation' we find 'a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation'; and the poet further describes his purpose, thus:

'The principal object which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men; and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement.'

Had Wordsworth stopped short here his ex-

periment must needs have proved a success, for it would have been based upon a sound principle. But unfortunately he went on to advocate the choice for poetic purposes of themes and language from low and rustic life, because 'in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language'; because rustics 'hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived, and because . . . being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions.' Here, beyond question, Wordsworth ventured too far; but we must not suppose that he intended to say that *all* poetry should be built of such rude materials, or indeed that he meant the arguments and assumptions of the *Preface* to be applied universally. The *Preface*, says Professor Minto, was 'much more limited in its purpose: it was apologetic and not constructive; it was really an elaborate justification of the poet's own practice in the case of the *Lyrical Ballads*, not the enunciation of a universally binding poetic creed — although Wordsworth, not the meekest of men, was inclined to

take the aggressive against what his critics considered 'good poetry.' Here, for instance, 'he was only, in a spirit of defiant paradox, playing for a little with the idea that if a poet dealt only with the feelings of peasants, and used only words known to them, his poetry was likely to be more permanently interesting and intelligible. And the paradox is arguable. . . .'[1]

That portion, then, of Wordsworth's theory which respects low and rustic life and speech need not be taken into account too strictly. Indeed, it does not enter as an essential ingredient into the theory at all, but is rather an adventitious and separable accident of it. The central position of the *Preface* of 1800, the very gist and core of Wordsworth's theory, is this: that Poetry has no vocabulary peculiar to herself; that passion, whether it utters itself metrically or not, uses the self-same language: that verse may be composed without employing any other words than such as are found in lofty and energetic prose, written or spoken.

'It may be safely affirmed,' says Wordsworth, 'that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.' But in what sense does

[1] *Literature of the Georgian Era*, pp. 159, 161.

Wordsworth use the word *language* here? Coleridge, on the ground that it was impossible to suspect Wordsworth of enouncing a truism, argues in the *Biographia* that *language* here must mean *style*: must have reference, that is, not to mere words themselves, but to the composition and arrangement, or *ordonnance*, of the words. And on this assumption, Coleridge proceeds to show that neither in Wordsworth's poetry, nor in any other, is the *language* (=*style*) identical with the *language* (=*style*) of prose. 'But it is impossible to read Wordsworth's preface through with care enough to group and put together his detached statements (concentration of dry thought not being one of his virtues as a writer), without feeling that he never meant to deny a difference between the language, in *this* sense, of prose, and that of metrical composition; 'and that when he spoke of there being no essential difference, etc., *he was thinking of the mere words, if by words we understand figurative words as well as plain literal words.* . . . What Wordsworth really objected to was the habitual employment by poets of certain conventional figures of speech that had dropped out of the prose style, and had come to be regarded as the exclusive colours of poetic diction. The expul-

sion of these conventionalities was all the revolution that he proposed in poetic style.'[1]

There is truth in this, if not the whole truth. Wordsworth's test for detecting poetic 'misdiction,' as he called it, in a lyric or sonnet, was simply to translate it into such language as any person of good sense and lively sensibility—who did not talk but of books—would use upon such an occasion in real life: where sonnet and prose paraphrase differed, there 'misdiction' was pretty sure to be. Why—we may suppose him to ask—why, if he wants to describe the flower-scents floating in the summer air, is the poet expected to speak of *June's spicy gales*? Why, for him, must the birds ever be the *feathered choir* or the *songsters of Spring*? Why must a running stream figure as the *purling rill*? Why must we call a country lass a *nymph*, her lover a *swain*, her home a *bower*?[2] What is there, after all, so singular, so abnormal, in the mere metrical arrangement of syllables, that it should come to be regarded as a symbol or promise of this distorted, artificial diction?

When Wordsworth said, then, that between

[1] Minto, *op. cit.*, pp. 163, 165.

[2] *Wordsworthiana*, p. 395; *Description of the Longman MSS.*, pp. 47, 48.

the language of poetry and that of prose there was and could be no difference, he had in his mind—not style or the ordonnance of words, but—the words themselves; and, this once granted, one difficulty between him and Coleridge instantly vanishes. In a note relating to 'Poetry and Prose' (*Anima Poetæ*, p. 229) Coleridge writes (the italics are ours):

> 'As soon as literature becomes common, and critics numerous in any country, and a large body of men seek to express themselves habitually in the most precise, sensuous, and impassioned words, the difference as to mere words [between poetry and prose] ceases, as, for example, the German prose writers. Produce to me *one* word out of Klopstock, Wieland, Schiller, Goethe, Voss, etc., which I will not find as frequently used in the most energetic prose writers. *The sole difference in style is that poetry demands a severe keeping—it admits nothing that prose may not often admit, but it oftener rejects. In other words, it presupposes a more continuous state of passion.*'

On this levelling, simplifying theory of poetic diction Wordsworth expended all the revolutionary ardour for which he had failed to find an outlet in public affairs. In the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798-1805, and in the *Poems* of 1807, its strength and its weakness are alike exhibited: its weakness in *The Thorn*, *The Sailor's Mother*,

and one or two other pieces; its strength in such poems as *Ruth, The Two April Mornings*, and, above all, the *Lucy* cycle—poems in which the profoundest depths of human emotion are reached, while the language rarely, if ever, rises above the ordinary conversational standard. 'It matters comparatively little,' concludes Professor Dowden, 'whether Wordsworth's statement of a theory of poetical diction can be sustained in all its parts; his practice was an effort to express the truth of human passion, and even his failures were on the side of truth.'[1]

The *Lyrical Ballads* were an experiment in poetic diction; they were also a new departure in respect of substance. Not that homely themes, such as those of *Simon Lee, The Idiot Boy*, and *The Mad Mother*, were new to English readers. On the contrary, the sentiment of interest in the lives of humble folk, of feeling for their joys and sorrows, was a vein which had been systematically worked for literary ends since 1742 (the date of Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*). It forms the leading motive of Mackenzie's novel, *The Man of Feeling*, and it appears, though

[1] *Poems of Wordsworth*, ed. Edward Dowden (Ginn and Co., Boston, 1897), *Introduction*, p. lxii. This is in every respect the best book of selections from Wordsworth's poetry.

less prominently, in *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sentimental Journey*. It inspires Goldsmith's *Sweet Auburn*, Langhorne's *Country Justice*, and Crabbe's *Village*; and expresses itself dramatically in the familiar *Beggar's Petition*. In 1790-1800 this sentiment was exploited chiefly by the Della Cruscan circle, in whose hands it had degenerated into mawkish drivel. It is undoubtedly with reference to these harmless and not unamiable scribblers that Wordsworth says in the *Preface* of 1800 (p. xiii):—

'I cannot be insensible of the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonorable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I mean to say that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but I believe that my habits of meditation have so formed my feelings, as that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*.'

This is not very clearly put, nor is Words-

worth's account of his purpose as full or significant as one might have wished: 'to illustrate the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement.' Wordsworth had renounced the Hartleian philosophy, but he employs the Hartleian terminology. He, however, adds a further definition 'in less general language: it is to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature.' From these two definitions we learn that towards 1798 his thoughts ran chiefly on the psychology of the great primary passions of human nature, and that this settled bias consciously determined his choice of poetical subjects. On this choice, and the purpose or bent which underlay and directed it, a few words must now be said.

In the spring of 1793, disturbed and mortified at the course of events in France, and burning with wrath against his native country, now at war with the infant republic on which his hopes were centred, Wordsworth resolved to avert his eyes for a time from public affairs and seek by ardent study the exact knowledge which should justify his passionate beliefs. Under the influence of Michel Beaupuy (1792) he had been led to take an eager part, abruptly and before

his time, in political controversy. That man is by nature good, that liberty is the panacea for every ill, that the institutions of society are to blame for the vices and sufferings of the individual, that human nature is infinitely perfectible—these were doctrines which he 'had oft revolved, Felt deeply, but not thoroughly understood By reason'; they were visitants, welcome, indeed, but 'Lodged only at the sanctuary's door, Not safe within its bosom.' 'Now, however, I began,' he says (*Prelude*, xi. 98), 'To meditate with ardor on the rule And management of nations; what it is And ought to be; and strove to learn how far Their power or weakness, wealth or poverty, Their happiness or misery, depends Upon their laws, and fashion of the State.' Presently, as his hopes of universal liberty waned, from the study of man in society he passed to the study of man the individual, turning his mind inwards upon itself, in the hope 'That, if the emancipation of the world Were missed, he should at least secure his own, And be in part compensated.' He entered upon a searching inquest into the constitution of human nature—'calling the mind Suspiciously to establish in plain day Her titles and her honours.' At this moment appeared God-

win's *Political Justice*, announcing a system which promised everything—inward light and guidance, self-knowledge and self-rule, a serene superiority to the accidents of life—to those who should leave all and follow William Godwin. 'Godwin,' says Professor Dowden,[1] 'had a remarkable gift for imposing upon himself; he reverenced his own understanding, and profoundly believed that his character was that of a benevolent sage.' 'The prophet of individualism diffused a kind of sanctity around him. The stoicism which he maintained himself and advised others to imitate; the contempt he professed for vulgar pleasures, for suffering, moral or physical, for sickness, and for calumny; and also his superiority to all the narrow and trifling interests of humanity, invested his system with a lofty dignity which recommended it to youthful souls,'[2] who, like Wordsworth, loved painstaking thoughts, and truth, their dear reward. That system represented the eighteenth-century cult of reason carried to the pitch of fetish-worship. Man, said Godwin, is in reality a passive, and not an active, being. He is neither more nor less than a reasoning machine. As he

[1] *The French Revolution and English Literature*, p. 48.
[2] Legouis: *Early Life of Wordsworth*, p. 263.

ought to be, and as, but for the pernicious influences of society, he would be, Man is like a stately vessel

> 'That asks no aid of Sail or Oar,
> That fears no spite of Wind or Tide,'

but is at once propelled and guided by the self-same inward power.

If, however, reason is thus to serve both as law and impulse to man, care must be taken to free it from everything that tends to disturb, confuse, or impede it. Or—to put it otherwise—if his intelligence is to be to man a magic glass wherein at all times he can descry his proper line of action, then must it be diligently polished clean of everything that would encrust or bedim its surface. The mind must be scoured and smooth-rubbed and stripped of all habitudes whatsoever—be they instincts, natural affections, sentiments, prejudices, or principles. The laws of the state, the traditional code of morals, the private maxims of personal honour must, equally and alike, be brushed aside. In short, there must have taken place, in the man, a complete dissolution of all that we understand by the words *moral character*, before Godwin will allow him to be reckoned one of the emancipated—

one truly 'Lord of himself, in undisturbed delight.'

Two objections to this preposterous system present themselves *in limine*, of so obvious and arduous a character that one is puzzled to conceive how Wordsworth could have overlooked or surmounted them. First, if 'man is to have his faculty of reason in act upon every occasion that occurs, and to conduct himself accordingly' (Godwin), must he not inevitably lose all capacity for action in the calculation of consequences? Secondly, Reason, as such, can never be a source or spring of action; to persuade a man to sobriety we must appeal, not to his reason, but to his sense of the pains of disease, poverty, and social disgrace, that is, to his feelings. The influence of reason upon conduct is indirect: it chooses the means, and weighs the ends of action, during which operation the feelings are in suspense; but the ultimate motives or springs of action are our feelings of pleasure or pain. Wordsworth, however, undeterred by these or other difficulties, embraced the system of Godwin with fervour. His own words are that he became 'a bigot to a new idolatry,' and that, 'Like a cowled monk, who had forsworn the world,' he 'Zealously laboured

to cut off his heart From all the sources of her former strength'; that is, from genial sympathy, and love, and faith in his fellow-man (*Prelude*, xii. 75-80; 44-48). Ere long, however, he discovered that the vaunted inner light of reason was little better than a will-o'-the-wisp—that the oracle enshrined within the soul too often delivered an ambiguous precept in uncertain accents. Man, he now perceived, was 'a Being Who hath in no concerns of his a test Of good and evil: knows not what to fear Or hope for, what to covet or to shun.' And, further, if man did indeed possess such an infallible inward test, wherein would he be profited, for where would be the motive power? Man might indeed in such conditions *see* the right, but, a rebel to the very law which he acknowledged, he would 'still act amiss, as selfish passion urged.' Lastly, he learned that by sedulously stripping himself of all forms and feelings, sentiments and principles, man was but emptying, sweeping, and garnishing the house of the soul for the demons of egotism, self-will, and pride to enter in and dwell there in the guise and garb of reason; so that the soul of man became, as it were, the stage on which the fiercest passions 'had the privilege to work, And never hear the sound of their own names.'

And now, for a time, Wordsworth 'lost All feeling of conviction, and, in fine, Sick, wearied out with contrarieties, yielded up moral questions in despair.' From this morbid state he was recalled to optimism and poetry by 'Nature's self, assisted by all varieties of human love'; chiefly by the love of his sister, Dorothy, now (Sept. 1795), after four years' separation, restored to him, and of his future wife, Mary Hutchinson. The lonely roads of Dorsetshire soon became his open schools, where he daily read with delight in the book of human nature, learning from 'men obscure and lowly' the beauty, grandeur, and prime worth of those simple affections on which Godwin had passed sentence of extermination. Gradually he came to see that man's happiness and wisdom lay, not in the repression of his feelings, but in their free play and full exercise; in the training and nurture of his soul —that wonderful thing, 'of a thousand faculties composed, and twice ten thousand interests'— and, more especially, in the cultivation of the great primary passions which constitute what he calls 'the universal heart' of mankind—in that, and in an active communion, through the sensitive intellect, with nature. He saw that the mind of man, when wedded to this goodly

universe in love and holy passion, would find an opening paradise in life's daily prospect—would find or half-create it there. And as these thoughts occurred the resolve sprang up within him: *I* will be the singer of this great consummation, this marriage between the mind and the external world; *my* voice shall proclaim 'the creation (by no lower name Can it be called) which they with blended might Accomplish.' Henceforward the mind of man shall be 'My haunt and the main region of my song.' My poetry shall become one great *psychography*, in which those faculties of the soul heretofore despised and neglected shall find due recognition and respect.

This resolve was taken while Wordsworth was still at Racedown (Oct. 1795-July 1797), and it certainly colours the *Ballads* of 1798. Of them we might fairly say, what Charles Lamb said of the fourth book of the *Excursion* (and indeed of the entire poem), that their 'general tendency is to abate the pride of the calculating *understanding*, and to reinstate the *imagination* and the *affections* in those seats from which modern philosophy has laboured but too successfully to expel them.' The *Lyrical Ballads* resemble stray leaves from an inventory of the mind's treasure-

house; they are like fragments from a survey of the vast, ill-explored continent of Mansoul. And on the leaves many a precious thing, hitherto despised or forgotten, is lovingly appraised; in the fragments many green islands, many fertile valleys and delectable mountains, are depicted in plain but telling words.

What differentiates the *Lyrical Ballads*, then, from other poems of humble life is this: that owing to the peculiar cast of the author's genius and the special bent of his interests at the time of writing, the several poems are also several studies in psychology. The mind, but above all the heart, of man is the poet's haunt, and the main region of his song. Poetry, says Wordsworth himself in a note on *The Thorn* (1800)—'poetry is the history or science of feelings.' 'The appropriate business of poetry,' he says elsewhere, '(which nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science), her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they seem to exist to the *senses*, and to the *passions*.' This psychological aspect of the several *Ballads*, it may be added, is briefly expounded in the notes at the end of this volume.

The three poems, *Peter Bell, The Three Graves,* and *The Wanderings of Cain,* are here given in an Appendix because, having been written in 1798, they appear to share a common psychological motive with *The Ancyent Marinere* and *Goody Blake* (see note on *Peter Bell,* p. 255). Ideas evolve themselves differently according to the minds in which they strike root. It is most interesting to study the various ways in which the same idea – the transforming effect of a curse, acting as a fixed painful idea upon the mind of its object—has been worked out by Coleridge and Wordsworth. In *The Ancyent Marinere* and in *Peter Bell* the psychological process issues in the *Conversion* of the curse-stricken soul; in *The Three Graves* and *Goody Blake* the victim sinks under the load and death ensues; *Cain* is but a meagre fragment from which it is impossible to infer what treatment the motive would have received. On this subject the reader should consult chap. iii. book iv. of M. Émile Legouis' exhaustive study of *The Early Life of William Wordsworth* (Dent, 1897). Of his obligations to M. Legouis the editor desires to make cordial and grateful acknowledgment, as also of his indebtedness to Professor Dowden's several published labours upon Wordsworth, and

to information privately obtained from the same liberal source. Dr. Garnett's recent *Poetry of S. T. Coleridge* (*Muses' Library*) has furnished him with some welcome details relating to *Lewti* and *The Three Graves*. The editor has also to thank Professor Skeat for his kind help in the *waif* difficulty (see *Ancyent Marinere*, l. 83, note, and *Additional Notes*, p. 261), and Professor Tyrrell for the version of the Latin motto prefixed in the later editions to *The Ancyent Marinere*. To Mr. William Hale White, whose *Examination of the charge of Apostasy against Wordsworth* is the latest contribution to the study of the poet, and to Mr. R. A. Potts, he is deeply indebted for ungrudging and invaluable help. The editor had hoped to find room here for a critical account of Coleridge's great ballad; but he must be content to refer the reader to the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke's *Introduction* to *The Golden Book of Coleridge*, and to Professor Dowden's Essay on *Coleridge as a Poet*, published in *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1889, and reprinted in his *New Studies in Literature*. Professor Knight's *Life of Wordsworth* and his *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth* and Mr. E. H. Coleridge's *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* and *Anima Poetæ* (all four indispensable aids to

the student of Wordsworth and his poet-friend) have been frequently drawn upon—never, the editor trusts, without proper acknowledgment—in the notes to this volume.

The two portraits (reproduced in photogravure) are as follows:—

William Wordsworth, *æt.* 28. Drawn in chalk by Robert Hancock for Joseph Cottle, Bristol, 1798.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *æt.* 22-3. Printed in 1795 by Peter Vandyke for Joseph Cottle, Bristol.

Both are now in the National Portrait Gallery.

T. H.

Easter 1898.

NOTE.—The two following accounts of the origin of the *Ancyent Marinere*, though they have been often reprinted, are too important to be omitted here. In 1843 Wordsworth stated to Miss Fenwick:—

'On Nov. 13, 1797, Coleridge, my sister, and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it. Accordingly we set off, and proceeded along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the *Ancient Mariner*, founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest

part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention, but certain parts I suggested; for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's *Voyages*, a day or two before, that while doubling Cape Horn they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. "Suppose," said I, "you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime." The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time, at least not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together on that, to me, memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular—

> "And listens like a three year's child;
> The Marinere hath his will."

These trifling contributions, all but one, which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded,[1] slipped out of his mind, as they well might. As we endeavoured to proceed conjointly (I speak of the

[1] The lines—

> 'And thou art long and lank and brown
> As is the ribb'd Sea-sand.'

same evening) our respective manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog.'

The following is Coleridge's account of the matter as given in chap. xiv. of his *Biographia Literaria* (ed. 1847, II. chap. i.):—

'During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset, diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity

where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

'In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

'With this view I wrote the *Ancient Mariner*, and was preparing, among other poems, the *Dark Ladie*, and the *Christabel*, in which I should have more nearly realised my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the *Lyrical Ballads* were published; and were presented by him

as an experiment, whether subjects, which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed in the language of ordinary life as to produce the pleasurable interest which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart.'

PS.—The Introduction and the Notes have been revised for this edition, and the text verified afresh by comparison with the originals. T. H.

Easter 1907.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

(1)

(A) Lyrical Ballads, | with | A few Other Poems. | Bristol: | Printed by Biggs and Cottle, | For T. N. Longman, Paternoster-row, London. | 1798. (8vo. Paper boards.)

(B) Lyrical Ballads, | with | A few Other Poems. | London: | Printed for J. & A. Arch, Gracechurch-street. | 1798. (8vo. Paper boards.)

Collation.—Title; *Advertisement*, pp. i.-v.; Contents, 1 page; Half-title: *The Rime*, etc. (p. 1); *Argument* (p. 3); Poems (*The Rime*, etc.—*The Mad Mother*), pp. 5-146; Half-title: *The Idiot Boy* (p. 147); Poems (*The Idiot Boy—Lines written . . . above Tintern Abbey*), pp. 149-210; Errata, 1 page, unnumbered; Advertisements of books 'Published for Joseph Cottle, Bristol, Mr. T. Longman, and Messrs. Lee and Hurst, Paternoster-row, London,' 2 pages.

Of (A) three copies only are known to exist—that (formerly Southey's) now in the library of the British Museum; the copy mentioned by the late R. H. Shepherd in his 'Bibliography of Coleridge,' of which the present whereabouts is unknown to the editor; and that owned by Mr. R. A. Potts. Cottle, whose story here, as often elsewhere, is untrustworthy, states that 'the heavy sale induced him to part with the largest proportion of the impression of 500, at a loss, to Mr. Arch.' As this transference must have been concluded within a fortnight from the appearance of the book (*c.* Sept. 1, 1798), it cannot have been due to 'the heavy sale.' Possibly Cottle hoped that Longman would take the whole impression, as he seems

to have done in the case of the second edition of Southey's *Joan of Arc*; and may, with this in view, have obtained leave to place Longman's name, as London publisher, on the title-page. But Longman had found cause to repent his bargain over *Joan*, and—says Coleridge, writing to Southey, Dec. 24, 1799 (*Letters of S. T. C.*, p. 319)—was now indisposed to all such negotiations. Anyhow, whether disappointed of Longman or not, Cottle sold practically the whole impression to Arch; and so promptly that Wordsworth, who wrote on September 15 begging Cottle to transfer his interest in the book to Johnson of St. Paul's Churchyard, was informed in reply that this could not be done, the first impression being already otherwise disposed of.

In the British Museum copy, already mentioned as showing the Bristol imprint, a cancelled Contents-table is bound in between Title and *Advertisement*, in which Coleridge's *Lewti; or The Circassian's Love-Chant* appears where, in the published 'Contents,' *The Nightingale* stands. And between *The Nightingale* and *The Female Vagrant* in the same copy are inserted the leaves (pp. 63-67) of the cancelled *Lewti* for which, at the last moment, *The Nightingale* (pp. 63-69) was substituted. This change deranged the paging of the published book, in which *The Nightingale* ends on p. 69; then follow a blank page and a page containing stanza i. of *The Female Vagrant*, both unnumbered; after which pp. 70, 71, and so on to p. 210, which is, in fact, p. 212. Sig. E does not appear, and from sig. D (p. 49) to sig. F (p. 81) there are 34, instead of 32, pages. A direction in Coleridge's hand to the printer of *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. 1800, implies that some early copies of the first edition, containing *Lewti*, were in existence. (W. Hale White's *Longman MSS.*, p. 35, note.)

In Mr. R. A. Potts's copy, after the *Yew-tree Inscription* (pp. 59-62) there follows an extra leaf (recto unnumbered, verso numbered 63*) on which are printed twenty-six lines of blank verse entitled *Domiciliary Verses, December*, 1795. These *Domiciliary Verses* reappear in the *Annual Anthology* for 1799 (pp. 287-288), where they are assigned (*errata*, p. 300) to Dr. Beddoes, founder of the Pneumatic Institution, Bristol, and father of Thomas Lovell Beddoes, the poet. 'When, at

the last moment, *Lewti* was cancelled, it may be that Coleridge entertained for a time the notion of utilising his friend's *Domiciliary Verses* as a partial stopgap. This would explain the paging (63*) on the verso of the inserted leaf. Finally, however, the poets decided to substitute *The Nightingale*—a course which had the effect of disordering the pagination.' (R. A. Potts: Letter to *Athenæum*, Jan. 14, 1899 (p. 51) on '*Lyrical Ballads*, 1798.')

One interesting feature, common to Southey's copy (now in the British Museum) and his own, is described as follows by Mr. R. A. Potts in a letter to *The Academy*, January 6, 1906:—

'In both these copies the last stanza on p. 19—ll. 199, 200 of the *Ancyent Marinere*—reads:

> With never a whisper in the Sea
> Oft [*sic*] darts the Spectre-ship.

In every copy with Arch's title-page that I have examined the "t" of "Oft" has been altered, evidently with a pen, to an "f." The alteration, therefore, was, we may fairly infer, made not by Cottle, but by the London publishers, J. & A. Arch of Gracechurch Street.'

Since this letter was written the existence of one copy with the London imprint, but lacking the correction described above, has been reported to Mr. Potts.

(2)

[2nd Edition, in two volumes, 1800.]

Lyrical Ballads, | with | Other Poems. | In Two Volumes. | By W. Wordsworth. | Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum! | Vol. I. | Second Edition. | London: | Printed for T. N. Longman and O. Rees, Paternoster-row, | By Biggs and Co., Bristol. | 1800. (8vo. Paper boards.) [The title of vol. ii. is identical, save that instead of 'Vol. i. Second Edition,' 'Vol. ii.' appears.]

Collation.—Title, Contents, *Preface*, pp. xlvi; a blank leaf; Poems (*Expostulation*, etc.—*Lines written near Richmond*), pp. 1-104; Half-title: *The Idiot Boy* (p. 105); Poems

(*The Idiot Boy—The Mad Mother*), pp. 107-150; Half-title: *The Ancient Mariner, A Poet's Reverie* (p. 151); *Argument* (p. 153); Poems (*The Ancient Mariner—Tintern Abbey*), pp. 155-210; Notes, five pages, unnumbered.

[Vol. ii.: Title and Contents, 2 leaves; Poems, pp. 1-225; Notes, pp. 226, 227; Errata, 1 page.]

In vol. i. all the poems of ed. 1798 re-appear (in a different order and with several changes of text), except *The Convict*, for which Coleridge's *Love* is substituted. The *Lines written near Richmond* become two poems: *Lines written when sailing in a Boat at Evening* (stt. i., ii.) and *Lines written near Richmond* (stt. iii.-v.). *The Old Man Travelling* becomes *Animal Tranquillity and Decay, a Sketch*. In place of the *Advertisement* of 1798 there appears the famous *Preface* in which Wordsworth defends his choice of diction and subjects.

On this edition generally, and more especially on vol. ii., the reader should consult Mr. W. Hale White's Monograph on *The Longman MSS. of Wordsworth and Coleridge*, and two letters, respectively headed *The Lyrical Ballads of* 1800 (J. D. C.) and *The Text of Wordsworth* (T. H.), printed in the *Athenæum*, Nov. 22, 1890, and July 4, 1896.

In January 1802 James Humphreys published a reprint of the *Lyrical Ballads* at Philadelphia, U.S. Of this, vol. ii. is simply a reprint of the London vol. ii., ed. 1800, while vol. i. 'is made up by adding to the text of the 1798 volume the poem *Love* and the *Preface* and other preliminary matter of ed. 1800.' (James Dykes Campbell in the *Athenæum*, Feb. 17, 1894, p. 213.)

(3)

Lyrical Ballads, | with | Pastoral | And Other | Poems, | In Two Volumes. | By W. Wordsworth. | Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum! | Vol. I. | Third Edition. | London: | Printed for T. N. Longman and O. Rees, Paternoster-Row, | By Biggs and Cottle, Crane-Court, Fleet Street. | 1802. (8vo. c Paper boards.)

[The title of vol. ii. is identical, save that instead of 'Vol. i. Third Edition,' there appears 'Vol. ii. Second Edition.']

Collation.—Title, Contents, 2 leaves; *Preface*, pp. i-lxiv;

Half-title: Lyrical Ballads, | with | Pastoral | and | Other Poems. | Pectus enim id est quod disertos facit, et vis mentis; ideoque imperitis quoquo [*sic*], si modo sint aliquo affectu concitati, verba non desunt. 1 leaf; Poems, pp. 1-200; Notes, 4 pages, unnumbered.

[Vol. ii.: Title, Contents, 2 leaves; Poems, pp. 1-236; Appendix on Poetic Diction, pp. 237-247; Notes, pp. 249, 250.]

In vol. i. *The Thorn* and *The Female Vagrant* appear with half-titles, as well as *The Ancient Mariner* and *The Idiot Boy*. *The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman*, *Lines written when sailing*, etc., and *Lines written near Richmond* (*Remembrance of Collins, written upon the Thames near Richmond*, edd. 1802, 1805) were transferred to vol. ii., to make room for the expanded *Preface*. Coleridge's *Dungeon* and Wordsworth's *A Character* (vol. ii.) were now omitted. The order varies from that of 1800, and there are many textual changes. The motto on the half-title is from Quintilian, *Institutiones*, x. vii. 15. Wordsworth quotes it in the course of the letter which he sent along with a copy of ed. 1800 to Charles Fox in January 1801. The *Argument* of the *Ancient Mariner* disappears.

(4)

Lyrical Ballads, | with | Pastoral | And Other | Poems. | In Two Volumes. | By W. Wordsworth. | Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum! | Vol. I. [Vol. II.] | Fourth Edition. | London: | Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, | By R. Taylor and Co. 38, Shoe-Lane. | 1805. (12mo. Paper boards.)

Collation.—Vol. i.: Title, Contents, 2 leaves; *Preface*, pp. i-lxiv; Half-title (same as in ed. 1802, but with 'quoquo' correctly), 1 leaf; Poems, pp. 1-200; Notes, 4 pages, unnumbered.

[Vol. ii.: Title, Contents, 2 leaves; Poems, pp. 1-236; Appendix, pp. 237-247; Notes, p. 248.]

Contents and order identical in both volumes with those of ed. 1802; some few textual changes.

No editor so far has ascertained the source of the motto on

the title-pages of *Lyrical Ballads*, edd. 1800-1805, which Wordsworth, in a note dated August 16, 1800, forwarded to the printer. Coleridge reiterates Wordsworth's directions at the foot of the note, adding, 'Be careful to print the motto accurately.' He then repeats it. Coleridge found the line in Anderson's *British Poets*, vol. iii. p. 238, where it occurs in the foreword *From the Author* [Selden] *of the Illustrations* prefixed to Drayton's *Polyolbion*. 'Quam nihil,' etc., has a hidden significance which is highly diverting. *Papinianus*—the name was that of a renowned Roman lawyer of the third century—is no other than that 'Counsellor keen,' Sir James Mackintosh, for whom Coleridge nursed a ludicrously vehement antipathy dating, according to Dan. Stuart, from the day when, during a philosophical *séance* at Cote House (the residence of John Wedgwood), Mackintosh had, in the presence of the poet's patrons, fairly worsted him in argument and driven him from the room. 'How absolutely *not* after your liking, O learned jurist!' It was a polite way of saying, 'Sus, apage! Haud tibi spiro.' Indeed Mackintosh came under the fourfold ban of the *Poet's Epitaph*: he was at once a statist, a lawyer, a physician, and a moralist; and he would have made a respectable Doctor of Divinity as well, so that he might be said to come within the scope of Wordsworth's *Anathema* on all five counts.

(5)

[First Reprint of *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798.]

Lyrical Ballads | Reprinted from the First | Edition of 1798| Edited by | Edward Dowden, LL.D. | Professor of English Literature in the | University of Dublin | London | Published by David Nutt in the Strand | 1890. (8vo. Half-bound in parchment: paper sides.)

Collation.—Half-title, Title (Imprint on verso: Chiswick Press:—C. Whittingham and Co., Tooks Court, Chancery Lane), and *Preface*, pp. xv; Reprint (facsimile) of *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. 1798—Title, *Advertisement*, pp. i.-v.; Contents, 1 page; Half-title: *The Rime*, etc. (page 1); *Argument*

(page 3); Poems, pp. 5-210; Errata, 1 page, unnumbered; Editor's Notes, pp. 213-227; Advertisements: Books published by David Nutt, pp. 1-10. David Nutt, 270 Strand, W.C.

This beautiful book is a page-for-page and line-for-line reprint in old-faced type. It passed into a second edition in 1891. Professor Dowden's Introduction assigns the *Lyrical Ballads* their place in the literary movement of the time. The notes briefly describe the circumstances which gave rise to the several poems, and the more important changes of text. There was a large-paper issue of 60 copies.

LYRICAL BALLADS,

WITH

A FEW OTHER POEMS.

LONDON:
Printed For J. & A. Arch, Gracechurch Street.
1798.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It is the honourable characteristic of Poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind. The evidence of this fact is to be sought, not in the writings of Critics, but in those of Poets themselves.

The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. Readers accustomed to the

gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will perhaps frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. It is desirable that such readers, for their own sakes, should not suffer the solitary word Poetry, a word of very disputed meaning, to stand in the way of their gratification; but that, while they are perusing this book, they should ask themselves if it contains a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents; and if the answer be favourable to the author's wishes, that they should consent to be pleased in spite of that most dreadful enemy to our pleasures, our own pre-established codes of decision.

Readers of superior judgment may disapprove of the style in which many of these pieces are executed; it must be expected that many lines and phrases will not exactly suit their taste. It will perhaps appear to them, that wishing to avoid the prevalent fault of the day, the author has sometimes descended too low, and that many of his expressions are too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity. It is apprehended that the more conversant the reader is with our elder writers, and with those in modern times who have been the most successful in painting manners and passions, the fewer complaints of this kind will he have to make.

An accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by severe thought, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is

mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced reader from judging for himself; but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that if poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

The tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill is founded on a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire. Of the other poems in the collection, it may be proper to say that they are either absolute inventions of the author, or facts which took place within his personal observation or that of his friends. The poem of the Thorn, as the reader will soon discover, is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person: the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently show itself in the course of the story. The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere was

professedly written in imitation of the *style*, as well as of the spirit, of the elder poets; but with a few exceptions, the Author believes that the language adopted in it has been equally intelligible for these three last centuries. The lines entitled Expostulation and Reply, and those which follow, arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy.

THE RIME OF

THE ANCYENT MARINERE,

IN SEVEN PARTS.

ARGUMENT.

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

It is an ancyent Marinere,
And he stoppeth one of three:
'By thy long grey beard and thy glittering eye
'Now wherefore stoppest me?

'The Bridegroom's doors are open'd wide
'And I am next of kin;
'The Guests are met, the Feast is set,—
'May'st hear the merry din.'

But still he holds the wedding-guest—
There was a Ship, quoth he—
'Nay, if thou 'st got a laughsome tale,
'Marinere! come with me.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,
Quoth he, there was a Ship—
'Now get thee hence, thou grey-beard Loon!
'Or my Staff shall make thee skip.'

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The wedding-guest stood still
And listens like a three year's child;
The Marinere hath his will.

The wedding-guest sate on a stone,
He cannot chuse but hear:
And thus spake on that ancyent man,
The bright-eyed Marinere.

The Ship was cheer'd, the Harbour clear'd—
Merrily did we drop
Below the Kirk, below the Hill,
Below the Light-house top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the Sea came he:
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the Sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—
The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

Bride hath pac'd into the Hall,
ed as a rose is she;
dding their heads before her goes
The merry Minstralsy.

The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot chuse but hear:
And thus spake on that ancyent Man,
The bright-eyed Marinere.

Listen, Stranger! Storm and Wind,
A Wind and Tempest strong!
For days and weeks it play'd us freaks—
Like Chaff we drove along.

Listen, Stranger! Mist and Snow,
And it grew wond'rous cauld:
And Ice mast-high came floating by
As green as Emerauld.

And thro' the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen;
Ne shapes of men ne beasts we ken—
The Ice was all between.

The Ice was here, the Ice was there,
The Ice was all around:
It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd—
Like noises of a swound.

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the Fog it came;
And an it were a Christian Soul,
We hail'd it in God's name.

The Marineres gave it biscuit-worms,
And round and round it flew:
The Ice did split with a Thunder-fit;
The Helmsman steer'd us thro'.

And a good south wind sprung up behind,
The Albatross did follow;
And every day for food or play
Came to the Mărinere's hollo!

In mist or cloud on mast or shroud
It perch'd for vespers nine,
Whiles all the night thro' fog-smoke white
Glimmer'd the white moon-shine.

'God save thee, ancyent Marinere!
'From the fiends that plague thee thus—
'Why look'st thou so?'—with my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

II

The Sun came up upon the right,
Out of the Sea came he;
And broad as a weft upon the left
Went down into the Sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet Bird did follow
Ne any day for food or play
Came to the Marinere's hollo!

And I had done an hellish thing
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird
That made the Breeze to blow.

Ne dim ne red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay
That bring the fog and mist.

The breezes blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow'd free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent Sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the Sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the Sea.

All in a hot and copper sky
The bloody sun at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, ne breath ne motion,
As idle as a painted Ship
Upon a painted Ocean.

Water, water, every where
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Ne any drop to drink.

The very deeps did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy Sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The Death-fires danc'd at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had follow'd us
From the Land of Mist and Snow.

And every tongue thro' utter drouth
Was wither'd at the root;
We could not speak no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah wel-a-day! what evil looks
  Had I from old and young;
Instead of the Cross the Albatross
  About my neck was hung.

III

I saw a something in the Sky
  No bigger than my fist;
At first it seem'd a little speck
  And then it seem'd a mist:
It mov'd and mov'd, and took at last
  A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
  And still it ner'd and ner'd;
And, an it dodg'd a water-sprite,
  It plung'd and tack'd and veer'd.

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd
  Ne could we laugh, ne wail:
Then while thro' drouth all dumb they stood
I bit my arm and suck'd the blood
  And cry'd, A sail! a sail!

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd
  Agape they hear'd me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin
And all at once their breath drew in
  As they were drinking all.

mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced reader from judging for himself; but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that if poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

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Her lips are red, *her* looks are free,
Her locks are yellow as gold:
Her skin is as white as leprosy,
And she is far liker Death than he;
Her flesh makes the still air cold.

The naked Hulk alongside came
And the Twain were playing dice;
'The Game is done! I've won, I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistled thrice.

A gust of wind sterte up behind
And whistled thro' his bones;
Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth
Half-whistles and half-groans.

With never a whisper in the Sea
Off darts the Spectre-ship;
While clombe above the Eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright Star
Almost atween the tips.

One after one by the horned Moon
(Listen, O Stranger! to me)
Each turn'd his face with a ghastly pang
And curs'd me with his ee.

Four times fifty living men,
With never a sigh or groan,
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump
They dropp'd down one by one.

Their souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe;
And every soul it pass'd me by,
Like the whiz of my Cross-bow.

IV

'I fear thee, ancyent Marinere!
'I fear thy skinny hand;
'And thou art long and lank and bro
'As is the ribb'd Sea-sand.

'I fear thee and thy glittering eye
'And thy skinny hand so brown'—
'Fear not, fear not, thou wedding gu
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all all alone
Alone on the wide wide Sea;
And Christ would take no pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men so beautiful,
And they all dead did lie!
And a million million slimy things
Liv'd on—and so did I.

I look'd upon the rotting Sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I look'd upon the eldritch deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I look'd to Heaven, and try'd to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I clos'd my lids and kept them close,
Till the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Ne rot, ne reek did they;
The look with which they look'd on me,
Had never pass'd away.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell
A spirit from on high:
But O! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemock'd the sultry main
Like morning frosts yspread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watch'd the water-snakes:
They mov'd in tracks of shining white;
And when they rear'd, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watch'd their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black
They coil'd and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gush't from my heart,
And I bless'd them unaware!
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I bless'd them unaware.

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

V

O sleep, it is a gentle thing
Belov'd from pole to pole!
To Mary-queen the praise be yeven
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck
That had so long remain'd,
I dreamt that they were fill'd with dew
And when I awoke it rain'd.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams
And still my body drank.

I mov'd and could not feel my limbs,
I was so light, almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed Ghost.

The roaring wind! it roar'd far off,
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air bursts into life,
And a hundred fire-flags sheen
To and fro they are hurried about;
And to and fro, and in and out
The stars dance on between.

The coming wind doth roar more loud;
The sails do sigh, like sedge:
The rain pours down from one black cloud
And the Moon is at its edge.

Hark! hark! the thick black cloud is cleft,
And the Moon is at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning falls with never a jag
A river steep and wide.

The strong wind reach'd the ship: it roar'd
And dropp'd down, like a stone!
Beneath the lightning and the moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groan'd, they stirr'd, they all uprose,
Ne spake, ne mov'd their eyes:
It had been strange, even in a dream
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steerd, the ship mov'd on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The Marineres all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do:
They rais'd their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me knee to knee:
The body and I pull'd at one rope,
But he said nought to me—
And I quak'd to think of my own voice
How frightful it would be!

The day-light dawn'd—they dropp'd their arms,
And cluster'd round the mast:
Sweet sounds rose slowly thro' their mouths
And from their bodies pass'd.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the sun:
Slowly the sounds came back again
Now mix'd, now one by one.

Sometimes a dropping from the sky
I heard the Lavrock sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are
How they seem'd to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning,

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceas'd: yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Listen, O listen, thou Wedding-guest!
'Marinere! thou hast thy will:
'For that, which comes out of thine eye, doth make
'My body and soul to be still.'

Never sadder tale was told
To a man of woman born:
Sadder and wiser thou wedding-guest!
Thou 'lt rise to morrow morn.

Never sadder tale was heard
By a man of woman born:
The Marineres all return'd to work
As silent as beforne.

The Marineres all 'gan pull the ropes,
But look at me they n'old:
Thought I, I am as thin as air—
They cannot me behold.

Till noon we silently sail'd on
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship
Mov'd onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep
From the land of mist and snow
The spirit slid: and it was He
That made the Ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune
And the Ship stood still also.

The sun right up above the mast
Had fix'd her to the ocean:

But in a minute she 'gan stir
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then, like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell into a swound.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life return'd,
I heard and in my soul discern'd
Two voices in the air,

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
'By him who died on cross,
'With his cruel bow he lay'd full low
'The harmless Albatross.

'The spirit who 'bideth by himself
'In the land of mist and snow,
'He lov'd the bird that lov'd the man
'Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he the man hath penance done
And penance more will do.

VI

FIRST VOICE.

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
'Thy soft response renewing—
'What makes that ship drive on so fast?
'What is the Ocean doing?'

SECOND VOICE.

'Still as a Slave before his Lord,
'The Ocean hath no blast:
'His great bright eye most silently
'Up to the moon is cast—

'If he may know which way to go,
'For she guides him smooth or grim.
'See, brother, see! how graciously
'She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE.

'But why drives on that ship so fast
'Withouten wave or wind?

SECOND VOICE.

'The air is cut away before,
'And closes from behind.

'Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high,
'Or we shall be belated:
'For slow and slow that ship will go,
'When the Marinere's trance is abated.'

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fix'd on me their stony eyes
That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never pass'd away:
I could not draw my een from theirs
Ne turn them up to pray.

And in its time the spell was snapt,
And I could move my een:
I look'd far-forth, but little saw
Of what might else be seen.

Like one, that on a lonely road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn'd round, walks on
And turns no more his head:
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

G 2281

But soon there breath'd a wind on me,
Ne sound ne motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea
In ripple or in shade.

It rais'd my hair, it fann'd my cheek,
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sail'd softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

O dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the Hill? Is this the Kirk?
Is this mine own countrée?

We drifted o'er the Harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
'O let me be awake, my God!
'Or let me sleep alway!'

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moon light lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

The moonlight bay was white all o'er,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
Like as of torches came.

A little distance from the prow
Those dark-red shadows were;
But soon I saw that my own flesh
Was red as in a glare.

I turn'd my head in fear and dread,
And by the holy rood,
The bodies had advanc'd, and now
Before the mast they stood.

They lifted up their stiff right arms,
They held them strait and tight;
And each right-arm burnt like a torch,
A torch that 's borne upright.
Their stony eye-balls glitter'd on
In the red and smoky light.

I pray'd and turn'd my head away
Forth looking as before.
There was no breeze upon the bay,
No wave against the shore.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steep'd in silentness
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turn'd my eyes upon the deck—
O Christ! what saw I there?

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat;
And by the Holy rood
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand:
It was a heavenly sight:
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light:

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but O! the silence sank,
Like music on my heart.

Eftsones I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the pilot's cheer:
My head was turn'd perforce away
And I saw a boat appear.

Then vanish'd all the lovely lights;
The bodies rose anew:
With silent pace, each to his place,
Came back the ghastly crew.
The wind, that shade nor motion made,
On me alone it blew.

The pilot, and the pilot's boy
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy,
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He 'll shrieve my soul, he 'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

VII

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the Sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with Marineres
That come from a far Contrée.

He kneels at morn and noon and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss, that wholly hides
The rotted old Oak-stump.

The Skiff-boat ner'd: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
'Where are those lights so many and fair
'That signal made but now?'

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
'And they answer'd not our cheer.
'The planks look warp'd, and see those sails
'How thin they are and sere!
'I never saw aught like to them
'Unless perchance it were
'The skeletons of leaves that lag
'My forest brook along:
'When the Ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
'And the Owlet whoops to the wolf below
'That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it has a fiendish look'—
(The Pilot made reply)
'I am a-fear'd.'—'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The Boat came closer to the Ship,
But I ne spake ne stirr'd!
The Boat came close beneath the Ship,
And strait a sound was heard!

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reach'd the Ship, it split the bay;
The Ship went down like lead.

Stunn'd by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote:
Like one that hath been seven days drown'd
My body lay afloat:
But, swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the Ship,
The boat spun round and round:
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I mov'd my lips: the Pilot shriek'd
And fell down in a fit.
The Holy Hermit rais'd his eyes
And pray'd where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laugh'd loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro,
'Ha! ha!' quoth he—'full plain I see,
'The devil knows how to row.'

And now all in mine own Countrée
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepp'd forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy Man!'
The Hermit cross'd his brow—
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say
'What manner man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench'd
With a woeful agony,
Which forc'd me to begin my tale
And then it left me free.

Since then at an uncertain hour,
Now ofttimes and now fewer,
That anguish comes and makes me tell
My ghastly aventure.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
The moment that his face I see
I know the man that must hear me;
To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The Wedding-guests are there;
But in the Garden-bower the Bride
And Bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little Vesper-bell
Which biddeth me to prayer.

O Wedding-guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the Marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me
To walk together to the Kirk
With a goodly company.

To walk together to the Kirk
And all together pray,
While each to his great father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And Youths, and Maidens gay.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding-guest!
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best,
All things both great and small:
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

The Marinere, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the wedding-guest
Turn'd from the bridegroom's door.

He went, like one that hath been stunn'd
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

THE

FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE,

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT.

FOSTER-MOTHER.

I NEVER saw the man whom you describe.

MARIA.

'Tis strange! he spake of you familiarly
As mine and Albert's common Foster-mother.

FOSTER-MOTHER.

Now blessings on the man, whoe'er he be,
That joined your names with mine! O my sweet lady,
As often as I think of those dear times
When you two little ones would stand at eve
On each side of my chair, and make me learn
All you had learnt in the day; and how to talk
In gentle phrase, then bid me sing to you—
'Tis more like heaven to come than what *has* been.

MARIA.

O my dear Mother! this strange man has left me
Troubled with wilder fancies, than the moon

Breeds in the love-sick maid who gazes at it,
Till lost in inward vision, with wet eye
She gazes idly!—But that entrance, Mother!

FOSTER-MOTHER.

Can no one hear? It is a perilous tale!

MARIA.

No one.

FOSTER-MOTHER.

My husband's father told it me,
Poor old Leoni!—Angels rest his soul!
He was a woodman, and could fell and saw
With lusty arm. You know that huge round beam
Which props the hanging wall of the old chapel?
Beneath that tree, while yet it was a tree
He found a baby wrapt in mosses, lined
With thistle-beards, and such small locks of wool
As hang on brambles. Well, he brought him home,
And reared him at the then Lord Velez' cost.
And so the babe grew up a pretty boy,
A pretty boy, but most unteachable—
And never learnt a prayer, nor told a bead,
But knew the names of birds, and mocked their notes,
And whistled, as he were a bird himself:
And all the autumn 'twas his only play

To get the seeds of wild flowers, and to plant them
With earth and water, on the stumps of trees.
A Friar, who gathered simples in the wood,
A grey-haired man—he loved this little boy,
The boy loved him—and, when the Friar taught him,
He soon could write with the pen: and from that time,
Lived chiefly at the Convent or the Castle.
So he became a very learned youth.
But Oh! poor wretch!—he read, and read, and read,
'Till his brain turned—and ere his twentieth year,
He had unlawful thoughts of many things:
And though he prayed, he never loved to pray
With holy men, nor in a holy place—
But yet his speech, it was so soft and sweet,
The late Lord Velez ne'er was wearied with him.
And once, as by the north side of the Chapel
They stood together, chained in deep discourse,
The earth heaved under them with such a groan,
That the wall tottered, and had well-nigh fallen
Right on their heads. My Lord was sorely frightened;
A fever seized him, and he made confession
Of all the heretical and lawless talk
Which brought this judgment: so the youth was seized
And cast into that hole. My husband's father

Sobbed like a child—it almost broke his heart:
And once as he was working in the cellar,
He heard a voice distinctly; 'twas the youth's,
Who sung a doleful song about green fields,
How sweet it were on lake or wild savannah,
To hunt for food, and be a naked man,
And wander up and down at liberty.
He always doted on the youth, and now
His love grew desperate; and defying death,
He made that cunning entrance I described:
And the young man escaped.

MARIA.

'Tis a sweet tale:
Such as would lull a listening child to sleep,
His rosy face besoiled with unwiped tears.—
And what became of him?

FOSTER-MOTHER.

He went on ship-board
With those bold voyagers, who made discovery
Of golden lands. Leoni's younger brother
Went likewise, and when he returned to Spain,
He told Leoni, that the poor mad youth,
Soon after they arrived in that new world,
In spite of his dissuasion, seized a boat,
And all alone, set sail by silent moonlight
Up a great river, great as any sea,
And ne'er was heard of more: but 'tis supposed,
He lived and died among the savage men.

LINES

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN

A YEW-TREE

WHICH STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE,
ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE,
YET COMMANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT.

— Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb;
What if these barren boughs the bee not loves;
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

— — — — — — — — Who he was
That piled these stones, and with the mossy sod
First covered o'er, and taught this aged tree,
Now wild, to bend its arms in circling shade,
I well remember.—He was one who own'd
No common soul. In youth, by genius nurs'd,
And big with lofty views, he to the world

Went forth, pure in his heart, against the taint
Of dissolute tongues, 'gainst jealousy, and hate,
And scorn, against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect: and so, his spirit damped
At once, with rash disdain he turned away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper;
And on these barren rocks, with juniper,
And heath, and thistle, thinly sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downward eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene; how lovely 'tis
Thou seest, and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty still more beauteous. Nor, that time,
Would he forget those beings, to whose minds,
Warm from the labours of benevolence,
The world, and man himself, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh
With mournful joy, to think that others felt
What he must never feel: and so, lost man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eyes streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died, this seat his only monument.

If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know, that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man, whose eye
Is ever on himself, doth look on one,
The least of nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O, be wiser thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

THE NIGHTINGALE;

A CONVERSATIONAL POEM, WRITTEN IN APRIL, 1798.

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen Light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy Bridge
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring: it flows silently
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
A balmy night! and tho' the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
'Most musical, most melancholy' * Bird!
A melancholy Bird? O idle thought!
In nature there is nothing melancholy.

* '*Most musical, most melancholy.*' This passage in Milton possesses an excellence far superior to that of mere description: it is spoken in the character of the melancholy Man, and has therefore a *dramatic* propriety. The Author makes this remark, to rescue himself from the charge of having alluded with levity to a line in Milton: a charge than which none could be more painful to him, except perhaps that of having ridiculed his Bible.

—But some night-wandering Man, whose heart was pierc'd
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper or neglected love,
(And so, poor Wretch! fill'd all things with himself
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrows) he and such as he
First nam'd these notes a melancholy strain;
And many a poet echoes the conceit,
Poet, who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretch'd his limbs
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell
By sun or moonlight, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
Should share in nature's immortality,
A venerable thing! and so his song
Should make all nature lovelier, and itself
Be lov'd, like nature!—But 'twill not be so;
And youths and maidens most poetical
Who lose the deep'ning twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.
My Friend, and my Friend's Sister! we have learnt
A different lore: we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices always full of love
And joyance! 'Tis the merry Nightingale

That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful, that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music! And I know a grove
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge
Which the great lord inhabits not: and so
This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
But never elsewhere in one place I knew
So many Nightingales: and far and near
In wood and thicket over the wide grove
They answer and provoke each other's songs—
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug
And one low piping sound more sweet than all—
Stirring the air with such an harmony,
That should you close your eyes, you might almost
Forget it was not day! On moonlight bushes,
Whose dewy leafits are but half disclos'd,
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright
and full,
Glistning, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle maid
Who dwelleth in her hospitable home

Hard by the Castle, and at latest eve,
(Even like a Lady vow'd and dedicate
To something more than nature in the grove)
Glides thro' the pathways; she knows all their notes,
That gentle Maid! and oft, a moment's space,
What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence: till the Moon
Emerging, hath awaken'd earth and sky
With one sensation, and those wakeful Birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if one quick and sudden Gale had swept
An hundred airy harps! And she hath watch'd
Many a Nightingale perch giddily
On blosmy twig still swinging from the breeze,
And to that motion tune his wanton song,
Like tipsy Joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell, O Warbler! till to-morrow eve,
And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!
We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
And now for our dear homes.—That strain again!
Full fain it would delay me!—My dear Babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's playmate. He knows well
The evening star: and once when he awoke

In most distressful mood (some inward pain
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream)
I hurried with him to our orchard plot,
And he beholds the moon, and hush'd at once
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes that swam with undropt tears
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well—
It is a father's tale. But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate Joy! Once more farewell,
Sweet Nightingale! once more, my friends!
farewell.

THE FEMALE VAGRANT.

By Derwent's side my Father's cottage stood,
(The Woman thus her artless story told)
One field, a flock, and what the neighbouring flood
Supplied, to him were more than mines of gold.
Light was my sleep; my days in transport roll'd:
With thoughtless joy I stretch'd along the shore
My father's nets, or watched, when from the fold
High o'er the cliffs I led my fleecy store,
A dizzy depth below! his boat and twinkling oar.

My father was a good and pious man,
An honest man by honest parents bred,
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read;
For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

Can I forget what charms did once adorn
My garden, stored with pease, and mint, and thyme,
And rose and lilly for the sabbath morn?
The sabbath bells, and their delightful chime;
The gambols and wild freaks at shearing time;
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
The cowslip-gathering at May's dewy prime;
The swans, that, when I sought the water-side,
From far to meet me came, spreading their snowy pride.

The staff I yet remember which upbore
The bending body of my active sire;
His seat beneath the honeyed sycamore
When the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire;
When market-morning came, the neat attire
With which, though bent on haste, myself I deck'd;
My watchful dog, whose starts of furious ire,
When stranger passed, so often I have check'd;
The red-breast known for years, which at my casement peck'd.

The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
Ah! little marked, how fast they rolled away:
Then rose a mansion proud our woods among,
And cottage after cottage owned its sway,
No joy to see a neighbouring house, or stray

Through pastures not his own, the master took;
My Father dared his greedy wish gainsay;
He loved his old hereditary nook,
And ill could I the thought of such sad parting brook.

But, when he had refused the proffered gold,
To cruel injuries he became a prey,
Sore traversed in whate'er he bought and sold:
His troubles grew upon him day by day,
Till all his substance fell into decay.
His little range of water was denied;[1]
All but the bed where his old body lay,
All, all was seized, and weeping, side by side,
We sought a home where we uninjured might abide.

Can I forget that miserable hour,
When from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower,
That on his marriage-day sweet music made?
Till then he hoped his bones might there be laid,
Close by my mother in their native bowers:
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed,—
I could not pray:—through tears that fell in showers,
Glimmer'd our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours!

[1] Several of the Lakes in the north of England are let out to different Fishermen, in parcels marked out by imaginary lines drawn from rock to rock.

There was a youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say.
'Mid the green mountains many and many a song
We two had sung, like little birds in May.
When we began to tire of childish play
We seemed still more and more to prize each other:
We talked of marriage and our marriage day;
And I in truth did love him like a brother,
For never could I hope to meet with such another.

His father said, that to a distant town
He must repair, to ply the artist's trade.
What tears of bitter grief till then unknown!
What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed!
To him we turned:—we had no other aid.
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept,
And her whom he had loved in joy, he said
He well could love in grief: his faith he kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

Four years each day with daily bread was blest,
By constant toil and constant prayer supplied.
Three lovely infants lay upon my breast;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
And knew not why. My happy father died
When sad distress reduced the children's meal:
Thrice happy! that from him the grave did hide
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears that flowed for ills which patience could not heal.

'Twas a hard change, an evil time, was come;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain.
But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
Beat round, to sweep the streets of want and pain.
My husband's arms now only served to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view:
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
To join those miserable men he flew;
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.

There foul neglect for months and months we bore,
Nor yet the crowded fleet its anchor stirred.
Green fields before us and our native shore,
By fever, from polluted air incurred,
Ravage was made, for which no knell was heard.
Fondly we wished, and wished away, nor knew,
'Mid that long sickness, and those hopes deferr'd,
That happier days we never more must view:
The parting signal streamed, at last the land withdrew,

But from delay the summer calms were past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains-high before the howling blast.
We gazed with terror on the gloomy sleep
Of them that perished in the whirlwind's sweep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,

That we the mercy of the waves should rue.
We reached the western world, a poor, devoted
crew.

Oh! dreadful price of being to resign
All that is dear *in* being! better far
In Wait's most lonely cave till death to pine,
Unseen, unheard, unwatched by any star;
Or in the streets and walks where proud men are.
Better our dying bodies to obtrude,
Than dog-like, wading at the heels of war,
Protract a curst existence, with the brood
That lap (their very nourishment!) their brother's
blood.

The pains and plagues that on our heads came
down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would tire brain unsettle even to hear.
All perished—all, in one remorseless year,
Husband and children! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored.

Peaceful as some immeasurable plain
By the first beams of dawning light impress'd,
In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main.
The very ocean has its hour of rest,
That comes not to the human mourner's breast.

Remote from man, and storms ortal ca/e,
A heavenly silence did the wave ivest;
I looked and looked along the s t air,
Until it seemed to bring a joy t y despair.

Ah! how unlike those late terri sleeps!
And groans, that rage of racking mine spoke,
Where looks inhuman dwelt on tering heaps!
The breathing pestilence that ro like smoke!
The shriek that from the distant ttle broke!
The mine's dire earthquake, and t allid host
Driven by the bomb's incessant thu r-stroke
To loathsome vaults, where heare anguish
toss'd, nde
Hope died, and fear itself in agony sick t!

Yet does that burst of woe congeal was lo e,
When the dark streets appeared nd d
gape, my fram
While like a sea the storming army o heave
And Fire from Hell reared his giga
And Murder, by the ghastly gleam, a me,
Seized their joint prey, the mother and shape!
But from these crazing thoughts my brain Rape!
—For weeks the balmy air breathed e chi d
mild, esca
And on the gliding vessel Heaven anc oft a n
smiled.

Some mighty gulph of separation past, Oc
I seemed transported to another world:—

A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
The impatient mariner the sail unfurl'd,
And whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home,
And from all hope I was forever hurled.
For me—farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man
might come.

And oft, robb'd of my perfect mind, I thought
At last my feet a resting-place had found:
Here will I weep in peace, (so fancy wrought,)
Roaming the illimitable waters round;
Here watch, of every human friend disowned,
All day, my ready-tomb the ocean-flood—
To break my dream the vessel reached its bound:
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted
food.

By grief enfeebled was I turned adrift,
Helpless as sailor cast on desart rock;
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor dared my hand at any door to knock.
I lay, where with his drowsy mates, the cock
From the cross timber of an out-house hung;
How dismal tolled, that night, the city clock!
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I frame my
tongue.

So passed another day, and so the third:
Then did I try, in vain, the crowd's resort,
In deep despair by frightful wishes stirr'd,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort:
There, pains which nature could no more support,
With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall;
Dizzy my brain, with interruption short
Of hideous sense; I sunk, nor step could crawl,
And thence was borne away to neighbouring hospital.

Recovery came with food: but still, my brain
Was weak, nor of the past had memory.
I heard my neighbours, in their beds, complain
Of many things which never troubled me;
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with careless cruelty,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans, which, as they said, would make a dead man start.

These things just served to stir the torpid sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
Memory, though slow, returned with strength; and thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,
At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
The lanes I sought, and as the sun retired,
Came, where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;

The wild brood saw me weep, my fate enquired,
And gave me food, and rest, more welcome, more
desired.

My heart is touched to think that men like these,
The rude earth's tenants, were my first relief:
How kindly did they paint their vagrant ease!
And their long holiday that feared not grief,
For all belonged to all, and each was chief.
No plough their sinews strained; on grating road
No wain they drove, and yet, the yellow sheaf
In every vale for their delight was stowed:
For them, in nature's meads, the milky udder
flowed.

Semblance, with straw and panniered ass, they
made
Of potters wandering on from door to door:
But life of happier sort to me pourtrayed,
And other joys my fancy to allure;
The bag-pipe dinning on the midnight moor
In barn uplighted, and companions boon
Well met from far with revelry secure,
In depth of forest glade, when jocund June
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial
moon.

But ill it suited me, in journey dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft, to
hatch;
To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,

Or hang on tiptoe at the lifted latch;
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill;
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

What could I do, unaided and unblest?
Poor Father! gone was every friend of thine:
And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help, and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Ill was I then for toil or service fit:
With tears whose course no effort could confine,
By high-way side forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, my idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

I lived upon the mercy of the fields,
And oft of cruelty the sky accused;
On hazard, or what general bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The fields I for my bed have often used:
But, what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
Is, that I have my inner self abused,
Foregone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

Three years a wanderer, often have I view'd,
In tears, the sun towards that country tend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
And now across this moor my steps I bend—
Oh! tell me whither——for no earthly friend
Have I.——She ceased, and weeping turned away,
As if because her tale was at an end
She wept;—because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

GOODY BLAKE, AND HARRY GILL.

A TRUE STORY.

Oh! what's the matter? what's the matter?
What is't that ails young Harry Gill?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still.
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover,
His voice was like the voice of three.

Auld Goody Blake was old and poor,
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
And any man who pass'd her door,
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling,
And then her three hours' work at night!
Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
—This woman dwelt in Dorsetshire,
Her hut was on a cold hill-side,
And in that country coals are dear,
For they come far by wind and tide.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage,
But she, poor woman, dwelt alone.
'Twas well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the *canty* dame
Would sit, as any linnet gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh! then how her old bones would shake!
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead;
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed,
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

Oh joy for her! when e'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout,
And scatter'd many a lusty splinter,
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile before-hand, wood or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could anything be more alluring,
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?
And now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake,
And vow'd that she should be detected,
And he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he 'd go,
And to the fields his road would take,
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watch'd to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand;
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble-land.

—He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'Tis Goody Blake,
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill.

Right glad was he when he beheld her:
Stick after stick did Goody pull,
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The bye-road back again to take,
He started forward with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, 'I've caught you then at last!
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall;
And kneeling on the sticks, she pray'd
To God that is the judge of all.

She pray'd, her wither'd hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
'God! who art never out of hearing,
'O may he never more be warm!'
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray,
Young Harry heard what she had said
And icy-cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill:
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he:
Another was on Thursday brought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
And blankets were about him pinn'd;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say 'tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
'Poor Harry Gill is very cold.'
A-bed or up, by night or day;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill.

LINES

WRITTEN AT A SMALL DISTANCE FROM MY HOUSE, AND SENT BY MY LITTLE BOY TO THE PERSON TO WHOM THEY ARE ADDRESSED.

It is the first mild day of March:
Each minute sweeter than before,
The red-breast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My Sister! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you, and pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress,
And bring no book, for this one day
We 'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living Calendar:
We from to-day, my friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now an universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth,
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than fifty years of reason;
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts may make,
Which they shall long obey;
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above;
We 'll frame the measure of our souls,
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress,
And bring no book; for this one day
We 'll give to idleness.

SIMON LEE,

THE OLD HUNTSMAN,

WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED.

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old man dwells, a little man,
I 've heard he once was tall.
Of years he has upon his back,
No doubt, a burthen weighty;
He says he is three score and ten,
But others say he 's eighty.

A long blue livery-coat has he,
That 's fair behind, and fair before;
Yet, meet him where you will, you see
At once that he is poor.
Full five and twenty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And, though he has but one eye left,
His cheek is like a cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And no man was so full of glee;
To say the least, four counties round
Had heard of Simon Lee;

His master's dead, and no one now
Dwells in the hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead:
He is the sole survivor.

His hunting feats have him bereft
Of his right eye, as you may see:
And then, what limbs those feats have left
To poor old Simon Lee!
He has no son, he has no child,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common.

And he is lean and he is sick,
His little body's half awry
His ancles they are swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
When he was young he little knew
Of husbandry or tillage;
And now he's forced to work, though weak,
—The weakest in the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often, ere the race was done,
He reeled and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices!

Old Ruth works out of doors with him,
And does what Simon cannot do;
For she, not over stout of limb,
Is stouter of the two.
And though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
Alas! 'tis very little, all
Which they can do between them.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what avails the land to them,
Which they can till no longer?

Few months of life has he in store,
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
His poor old ancles swell.
My gentle reader, I perceive
How patiently you 've waited,
And I 'm afraid that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle reader! you would find
A tale in every thing.

What more I have to say is short,
I hope you'll kindly take it;
It is no tale; but should you think
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old man doing all he could
About the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock totter'd in his hand;
So vain was his endeavour
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.

'You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool' to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffer'd aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I sever'd,
At which the poor old man so long
And vainly had endeavour'd.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning.
Alas! the gratitude of men
Has oftner left me mourning.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS,

SHEWING HOW THE ART OF LYING MAY BE TAUGHT.

I HAVE a boy of five years old,
His face is fair and fresh to see;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we stroll'd on our dry walk,
Our quiet house all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
My pleasant home, when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
To think, and think, and think again;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

My boy was by my side, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And oftentimes I talked to him,
In very idleness.

The young lambs ran a pretty race;
The morning sun shone bright and warm;
'Kilve,' said I, 'was a pleasant place,
'And so is Liswyn farm.

'My little boy, which like you more,'
I said and took him by the arm—
'Our home by Kilve's delightful shore,
'Or here at Liswyn farm?

'And tell me, had you rather be,'
I said and held him by the arm,
'At Kilve's smooth shore by the green sea,
'Or here at Liswyn farm?'

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, 'At Kilve I'd rather be
'Than here at Liswyn farm.'

'Now, little Edward, say why so;
'My little Edward, tell me why;
'I cannot tell, I do not know.'
'Why this is strange,' said I.

'For, here are woods and green-hills warm;
'There surely must some reason be
'Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
'For Kilve by the green sea.'

At this, my boy, so fair and slim,
Hung down his head, nor made reply;
And five times did I say to him,
'Why? Edward, tell me why?'

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And thus to me he made reply;
'At Kilve there was no weather-cock,
'And that 's the reason why.'

Oh dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

WE ARE SEVEN.

A SIMPLE child, dear brother Jim,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage girl,
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That cluster'd round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair,
—Her beauty made me glad.

'Sisters and brothers, little maid,
'How many may you be?'
'How many? seven in all,' she said,
And wondering looked at me.

'And where are they, I pray you tell?'
She answered, 'Seven are we,
'And two of us at Conway dwell,
'And two are gone to sea.

'Two of us in the church-yard lie,
'My sister and my brother,
'And in the church-yard cottage, I
'Dwell near them with my mother.'

'You say that two at Conway dwell,
'And two are gone to sea,
'Yet you are seven; I pray you tell
'Sweet Maid, how this may be?'

Then did the little Maid reply,
'Seven boys and girls are we;
'Two of us in the church-yard lie,
'Beneath the church-yard tree.'

'You run about, my little maid,
'Your limbs they are alive;
'If two are in the church-yard laid,
'Then ye are only five.'

'Their graves are green, they may be seen,'
The little Maid replied,
'Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
'And they are side by side.

'My stockings there I often knit,
'My 'kerchief there I hem;
'And there upon the ground I sit—
'I sit and sing to them.

'And often after sunset, Sir,
'When it is light and fair,
'I take my little porringer,
'And eat my supper there.

'The first that died was little Jane;
'In bed she moaning lay,
'Till God released her of her pain,
'And then she went away.

'So in the church-yard she was laid,
'And all the summer dry,
'Together round her grave we played,
'My brother John and I.

'And when the ground was white with snow,
'And I could run and slide,
'My brother John was forced to go,
'And he lies by her side.'

'How many are you then,' said I,
'If they two are in Heaven?'
The little Maiden did reply,
'O Master! we are seven.'

'But they are dead; those two are dead!
'Their spirits are in heaven!'
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, 'Nay, we are seven!'

LINES

WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it griev'd my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose-tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trail'd its wreathes;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd:
Their thoughts I cannot measure,
But the least motion which they made,
It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If I these thoughts may not prevent,
If such be of my creed the plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

THE THORN.

I

THERE is a thorn; it looks so old,
In truth you 'd find it hard to say,
How it could ever have been young,
It looks so old and grey.
Not higher than a two-years' child,
It stands erect this aged thorn;
No leaves it has, no thorny points;
It is a mass of knotted joints,
A wretched thing forlorn.
It stands erect, and like a stone
With lichens it is overgrown.

II

Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown
With lichens to the very top,
And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
A melancholy crop:
Up from the earth these mosses creep,
And this poor thorn they clasp it round
So close, you 'd say that they were bent
With plain and manifest intent,
To drag it to the ground;
And all had joined in one endeavour
To bury this poor thorn for ever.

III

High on a mountain's highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
It sweeps from vale to vale;
Not five yards from the mountain path,
This thorn you on your left espy;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water, never dry;
I've measured it from side to side
'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.

IV

And close beside this aged thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.
All lovely colours there you see,
All colours that were ever seen,
And mossy network too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been,
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.

V

Ah me! what lovely tints are there!
Of olive-green and scarlet bright,

In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
Green, red, and pearly white.
This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss,
Which close beside the thorn you see,
So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
Is like an infant's grave in size
As like as like can be:
But never, never any where
An infant's grave was half so fair.

VI

Now would you see this aged thorn,
This pond and beauteous hill of moss,
You must take care and choose your time
The mountains when to cross.
For oft there sits, between the heap
That's like an infant's grave in size,
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
'Oh misery! oh misery!
'Oh woe is me! oh misery!'

VII

At all times of the day and night
This wretched woman thither goes,
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows;
And there beside the thorn she sits
When the blue day-light's in the skies,

And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
'Oh misery! oh misery!
'Oh woe is me! oh misery!'

VIII

'Now wherefore thus, by day and night,
'In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
'Thus to the dreary mountain-top
'Does this poor woman go?
'And why sits she beside the thorn
'When the blue day-light's in the sky,
'Or when the whirlwind's on the hill,
'Or frosty air is keen and still,
'And wherefore does she cry?—
'Oh wherefore? wherefore? tell me why
'Does she repeat that doleful cry?'

IX

I cannot tell; I wish I could;
For the true reason no one knows,
But if you'd gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes;
The heap that's like an infant's grave,
The pond—and thorn, so old and grey
Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
And if you see her in her hut,
Then to the spot away!—

I never heard of such as dare
Approach the spot when she is there.

X

'But wherefore to the mountain-top
'Can this unhappy woman go,
'Whatever star is in the skies,
'Whatever wind may blow?'
Nay rack your brain—'tis all in vain,
I 'll tell you every thing I know;
But to the thorn, and to the pond
Which is a little step beyond,
I wish that you would go:
Perhaps when you are at the place
You something of her tale may trace.

XI

I 'll give you the best help I can:
Before you up the mountain go,
Up to the dreary mountain-top,
I 'll tell you all I know.
'Tis now some two and twenty years
Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
Gave with a maiden's true good will
Her company to Stephen Hill;
And she was blithe and gay,
And she was happy, happy still
Whene'er she thought of Stephen Hill.

XII

And they had fix'd the wedding-day,
The morning that must wed them both;
But Stephen to another maid
Had sworn another oath;
And with this other maid to church
Unthinking Stephen went—
Poor Martha! on that woful day
A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
Into her bones was sent:
It dried her body like a cinder,
And almost turn'd her brain to tinder.

XIII

They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer-leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen.
'Tis said, a child was in her womb,
As now to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and she was mad,
Yet often she was sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
Oh me! ten thousand times I 'd rather
That he had died, that cruel father!

XIV

Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!

Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas when we talked of this,
Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
That in her womb the infant wrought
About its mother's heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

XV

No more I know, I wish I did,
And I would tell it all to you;
For what became of this poor child
There's none that ever knew:
And if a child was born or no,
There's no one that could ever tell;
And if 'twas born alive or dead,
There's no one knows, as I have said,
But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.

XVI

And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
'Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
The church-yard path to seek:
For many a time and oft were heard

Cries coming from the mountain-head,
Some plainly living voices were,
And others, I 've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead:
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVII

But that she goes to this old thorn,
The thorn which I 've described to you,
And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climbed the mountain's height:
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.

XVIII

'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain,
No screen, no fence could I discover,
And then the wind! in faith, it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag, and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain,
And, as I am a man,

Instead of jutting crag, I found
A woman seated on the ground.

XIX

I did not speak—I saw her face,
Her face it was enough for me;
I turned about and heard her cry,
'O misery! O misery!'
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go,
And when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders and you hear her cry,
'Oh misery! Oh misery!'

XX

'But what's the thorn? and what's the pond?
'And what's the hill of moss to her?
'And what's the creeping breeze that comes
'The little pond to stir?'
I cannot tell; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree,
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond,
But all and each agree,
The little babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXI

I've heard the scarlet moss is red
With drops of that poor infant's blood;
But kill a new-born infant thus!
I do not think she could.
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain
The baby looks at you again.

XXII

And some had sworn an oath that she
Should be to public justice brought;
And for the little infant's bones
With spades they would have sought.
But then the beauteous hill of moss
Before their eyes began to stir;
And for full fifty yards around,
The grass it shook upon the ground:
But all do still aver
The little babe is buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXIII

I cannot tell how this may be,
But plain it is, the thorn is bound

With heavy tufts of moss, that strive
To drag it to the ground.
And this I know, full many a time,
When she was on the mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright,
That I have heard her cry,
'O misery! O misery!
'O woe is me! oh misery!

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK

In distant countries I have been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad high-way, I met;
Along the broad high-way he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet.
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad,
And in his arms a lamb he had.

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide:
Then with his coat he made essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I follow'd him, and said, 'My friend
'What ails you? wherefore weep you so?'
—'Shame on me, Sir! this lusty lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock;
He is the last of all my flock.

When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,

Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, a ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see,
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I number'd a full score,
And every year encreas'd my store.

Year after year my stock it grew,
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As sweet a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the mountain did they feed.
They throve, and we at home did thrive.
—This lusty lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive:
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

Ten children, Sir! had I to feed,
Hard labour in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief,
I of the parish ask'd relief.
They said I was a wealthy man;
My sheep upon the mountain fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread:'
'Do this; how can we give to you,'
They cried, 'what to the poor is due?'

I sold a sheep as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food;
For me it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away!
For me it was a woeful day.

'Another still! and still another!
A little lamb, and then its mother!
It was a vein that never stopp'd,
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropp'
Till thirty were not left alive
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one,
And I may say that many a time
I wished they all were gone:
They dwindled one by one away;
For me it was a woeful day.

To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies cross'd my mind,
And every man I chanc'd to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me.
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease, within doors or without,
And crazily, and wearily,
I went my work about.

Oft-times I thought to run away;
For me it was a woeful day.

Sir! 'twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas! it was an evil time;
God cursed me in my sore distress,
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less;
And every week, and every day,
My flock, it seemed to melt away.

They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a weather, and a ewe;
And then at last, from three to two;
And of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one,
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas! and I have none;
To-day I fetched it from the rock;
It is the last of all my flock.'

THE DUNGEON.

And this place our forefathers made for man!
This is the process of our love and wisdom,
To each poor brother who offends against us—
Most innocent, perhaps—and what if guilty?
Is this the only cure? Merciful God!
Each pore and natural outlet shrivell'd up
By ignorance and parching poverty,
His energies roll back upon his heart,
And stagnate and corrupt; till changed to poison,
They break out on him, like a loathsome plague-spot;
Then we call in our pamper'd mountebanks—
And this is their best cure! uncomforted
And friendless solitude, groaning and tears,
And savage faces, at the clanking hour,
Seen through the steams and vapour of his dungeon,
By the lamp's dismal twilight! So he lies
Circled with evil, till his very soul
Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deformed
By sights of ever more deformity!

With other ministrations thou, O nature!
Healest thy wandering and distempered child:
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters,
Till he relent, and can no more endure
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing,
Amid this general dance and minstrelsy;
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit healed and harmonized
By the benignant touch of love and beauty.

THE MAD MOTHER.

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair,
Her eye-brows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone;
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the green-wood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among
And it was in the English tongue.

'Sweet babe! they say that I am mad
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me,
But, safe as in a cradle, here
My lovely baby! thou shalt be,
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;

And fiendish faces one, two, three,
Hung at my breasts, and pulled at me.
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good;
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers press'd.
The breeze I see is in the tree;
It comes to cool my babe and me.

Oh! love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother's only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul;
Then happy lie, for blest am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion I will be;
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I 'll build an Indian bower; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed:
And if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true 'till I am dead,
My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing,
As merry as the birds in spring.

Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest:
'Tis all thine own! and if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown;
But thou wilt live with me in love,
And what if my poor cheek be brown?
'Tis well for me; thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

Dread not their taunts, my little life!
I am thy father's wedded wife;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stay'd:
From him no harm my babe can take,
But he, poor man! is wretched made,

And every day we two will pray
For him that 's gone and far away.

I 'll teach my boy the sweetest things;
I 'll teach him how the owlet sings.
My little babe! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost suck'd thy fill.
—Where art thou gone my own dear child?
What wicked looks are those I see?
Alas! alas! that look so wild,
It never, never came from me:
If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
Then I must be for ever sad.

Oh! smile on me, my little lamb!
For I thy own dear mother am.
My love for thee has well been tried:
I 've sought thy father far and wide.
I know the poisons of the shade,
I know the earth-nuts fit for food;
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid;
We 'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!
And there, my babe, we 'll live for aye.'

THE IDIOT BOY.

'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
The moon is up—the sky is blue,
The owlet in the moonlight air,
He shouts from nobody knows where;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!

—Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
Why are you in this mighty fret?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your idiot boy?

Beneath the moon that shines so bright,
Till she is tired, let Betty Foy
With girt and stirrup fiddle-faddle;
But wherefore set upon a saddle
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy?

There 's scarce a soul that 's out of bed;
Good Betty! put him down again;
His lips with joy they burr at you,
But, Betty! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?

The world will say 'tis very idle,
Bethink you of the time of night;
There 's not a mother, no not one,
But when she hears what you have done,
Oh! Betty, she 'll be in a fright.

But Betty 's bent on her intent,
For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There 's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress:
Old Susan lies a bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband 's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There 's none to help poor Susan Gale,
What must be done? what will betide?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her pony, that is mild and good,
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,
And by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has up upon the saddle set,
The like was never heard of yet,
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge that 's in the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand,
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a hurly-burly now
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The boy who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was, 'Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
'Come home again, nor stop at all,
'Come home again, whate'er befal,
'My Johnny do, I pray you do.'

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head, and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too,
And then! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the pony's side,
On which her idiot boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the pony moved his legs,
Oh! then for the poor idiot boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He's idle all for very joy.

And while the pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left-hand you may see,
The green bough's motionless and dead;
The moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship,
Oh! happy, happy, happy John.

And Betty's standing at the door,
And Betty's face with joy o'erflows,
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim;
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her idiot boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
He's at the guide-post—he turns right,
She watches till he's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it,
Meek as a lamb the pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
And Johnny's in a merry tune,
The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
And on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree,
For of this pony there's a rumour,
That should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a horse that thinks!
And when he thinks his pace is slack;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet for his life he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What comfort Johnny soon will bring,
With many a merry diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit and Johnny's glory.

And Betty's still at Susan's side:
By this time she's not quite so flurried;
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more,
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well,
And to the road she turns her ears
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans,
'As sure as there's a moon in heaven,'
Cries Betty, 'he 'll be back again;
'They 'll both be here, 'tis almost ten,
'They 'll both be here before eleven.'

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans,
The clock gives warning for eleven;
'Tis on the stroke—'If Johnny 's near,'
Quoth Betty, 'he will soon be here,
'As sure as there 's a moon in heaven.'

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight,
The moon 's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast;
'A little idle sauntering thing!'
With other names, an endless string,
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
'How can it be he is so late?
'The doctor he has made him wait,
'Susan! they'll both be here anon.'

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
And Betty's in a sad quandary;
And then there's nobody to say
If she must go or she must stay:
—She's in a sad quandary.

The clock is on the stroke of one;
But neither Doctor nor his guide
Appear along the moonlight road,
There's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty's still at Susan's side.

And Susan she begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drown'd,
Or lost perhaps, and never found;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With, 'God forbid it should be true!'
At the first word that Susan said
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
'Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.

'I must be gone, I must away,
'Consider, Johnny 's but half-wise;
'Susan, we must take care of him,
'If he is hurt in life or limb'—
'Oh God forbid!' poor Susan cries.

'What can I do?' says Betty, going,
'What can I do to ease your pain?
'Good Susan tell me, and I 'll stay;
'I fear you 're in a dreadful way,
'But I shall soon be back again.'

'Good Betty go, good Betty go,
'There 's nothing that can ease my pain.'
Then off she hies, but with a prayer
That God poor Susan's life would spare,
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale;
And how she ran, and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green,
'Twas Johnny, Johnny, every where.

She 's past the bridge that 's in the dale,
And now the thought torments her sore,
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon that 's in the brook,
And never will be heard of more.

And now she 's high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There 's neither Johnny nor his horse,
Among the fern or in the gorse;
There 's neither doctor nor his guide.

'Oh saints! what is become of him?
'Perhaps he 's climbed into an oak,
'Where he will stay till he is dead;
'Or sadly he has been misled,
'And joined the wandering gypsey-folk.

'Or him that wicked pony 's carried
'To the dark cave, the goblins' hall,
'Or in the castle he 's pursuing,
'Among the ghosts, his own undoing;
'Or playing with the waterfall.'

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
'If Susan had not been so ill,
'Alas! I should have had him still,
'My Johnny, till my dying day.'

Poor Betty! in this sad distemper,
The doctor's self would hardly spare,
Unworthy things she talked and wild,
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The pony had his share.

And now she's got into the town,
And to the doctor's door she hies;
'Tis silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she's at the doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap,
The doctor at the casement shews,
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze;
And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

'Oh Doctor! Doctor! where's my Johnny?'
'I'm here, what is't you want with me?'
'Oh Sir! you know I'm Betty Foy,
'And I have lost my poor dear boy,
'You know him—him you often see;

'He's not so wise as some folks be,'
'The devil take his wisdom!' said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
'What, woman! should I know of him?'
And, grumbling, he went back to bed.

'O woe is me! O woe is me!
'Here will I die; here will I die;
'I thought to find my Johnny here,
'But he is neither far nor near,
'Oh! what a wretched mother I!'

She stops, she stands, she looks about,
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again;
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail,
This piteous news so much it shock'd her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road,
'Oh cruel! I'm almost three-score;
'Such night as this was ne'er before,
'There's not a single soul abroad.'

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers, yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin;
A green-grown pond she just has pass'd,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before;
'Oh dear, dear pony! my sweet joy!
'Oh carry back my idiot boy!
'And we will ne'er o'erload thee more.'

A thought is come into her head;
'The pony he is mild and good,
'And we have always used him well;
'Perhaps he 's gone along the dell,
'And carried Johnny to the wood.'

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be,
To drown herself therein.

Oh reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his horse are doing!
What they 've been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he 's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And still and mute, in wonder lost,
All like a silent horseman-ghost,
He travels on along the vale.

And now, perhaps, he 's hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he!
Yon valley, that 's so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desart wilderness will be.

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He 's galloping away, away,
And so he 'll gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil.

I to the muses have been bound,
These fourteen years, by strong indentures;
Oh gentle muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befel,
For sure he met with strange adventures.

Oh gentle muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me?
Ye muses! whom I love so well.

Who's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse?

Unto his horse, that's feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read,
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that's the very pony too.
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring water-fall she hears,
And cannot find her idiot boy.

Your pony's worth his weight in gold,
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She's coming from among the trees,
And now, all full in view, she sees
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy.

And Betty sees the pony too:
Why stand you thus Good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your idiot boy.

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy;
She darts as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the horse,
And fast she holds her idiot boy.

And Johnny burrs and laughs aloud,
Whether in cunning or in joy,
I cannot tell; but while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs,
To hear again her idiot boy.

And now she's at the pony's tail,
And now she's at the pony's head,
On that side now, and now on this,
And almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again,
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy;
She 's happy here, she 's happy there,
She is uneasy every where;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

'Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor;
'You 've done your best, and that is all.'
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the pony's head
From the loud water-fall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The pony, Betty, and her boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale:
And who is she, be-times abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale?

Long Susan lay deep lost in thought,
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her messenger and nurse;
And as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body it grew better.

She turned, she toss'd herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

'Alas! what is become of them?
'These fears can never be endured,
'I'll to the wood.'—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she posts up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come,
She spies her friends, she shouts a greeting;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting,
As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward wend;
The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song,
And with the owls must end.

For while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, 'Tell us Johnny, do,
'Where all this long night you have been,
'What you have heard, what you have seen,
'And Johnny, mind you tell us true.'

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive;
No doubt too he the moon had seen;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus to Betty's question, he
Made answer, like a traveller bold,
(His very words I give to you,)
'The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
'And the sun did shine so cold.'
—Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.

LINES

WRITTEN NEAR RICHMOND, UPON THE THAMES, AT EVENING.

How rich the wave, in front, imprest
With evening-twilight's summer hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent path pursues!
And see how dark the backward stream!
A little moment past, so smiling!
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterer beguiling.

Such views the youthful bard allure,
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colours shall endure
'Till peace go with him to the tomb.
—And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow!
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to-morrow?

Glide gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames! that other bards may see,
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to me.

Oh glide, fair stream! for ever so;
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
'Till all our minds for ever flow,
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought! yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such heart did once the poet bless,
Who, pouring here a* *later* ditty,
Could find no refuge from distress,
But in the milder grief of pity.

Remembrance! as we glide along,
For him suspend the dashing oar,
And pray that never child of Song
May know his freezing sorrows more.
How calm! how still! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended!
—The evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest powers attended.

* Collins's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his lifetime. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY.

'Why William, on that old grey stone,
'Thus for the length of half a day,
'Why William, sit you thus alone,
'And dream your time away?

'Where are your books? that light bequeath'd
'To beings else forlorn and blind!
'Up! Up! and drink the spirit breath'd
'From dead men to their kind.'

'You look round on your mother earth,
'As if she for no purpose bore you;
'As if you were her first-born birth,
'And none had lived before you!'

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply.

'The eye it cannot chuse but see,
'We cannot bid the ear be still;
'Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
'Against, or with our will.

'Nor less I deem that there are powers,
'Which of themselves our minds impress,
'That we can feed this mind of ours,
'In a wise passiveness.

'Think you, mid all this mighty sum
'Of things for ever speaking,
'That nothing of itself will come,
'But we must still be seeking?

'—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
'Conversing as I may,
'I sit upon this old grey stone,
'And dream my time away.'

THE TABLES TURNED;

AN EVENING SCENE, ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks,
Why all this toil and trouble?
Up! up! my friend, and quit your books,
Or surely you 'll grow double.

The sun above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow,
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife,
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music; on my life
There 's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
And he is no mean preacher;
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man;
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things;
—We murder to dissect.

Enough of science and of art;
Close up these barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

OLD MAN TRAVELLING;

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY,

A SKETCH.

The little hedge-row birds,
That peck along the road, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression; every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought—He is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten, one to whom
Long patience has such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing, of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect, that the young behold
With envy, what the old man hardly feels.
—I asked him whither he was bound, and what
The object of his journey; he replied
'Sir! I am going many miles to take
'A last leave of my son, a mariner,
'Who from a sea-fight has been brought to Falmouth,
'And there is dying in an hospital.'

THE COMPLAINT OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN.

[*When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions; he is left behind, covered over with Deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he is unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the Desart; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other Tribes of Indians. It is unnecessary to add that the females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work,* Hearne's Journey *from* Hudson's Bay *to the* Northern Ocean. *When the Northern Lights, as the same writer informs us, vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise. This circumstance is alluded to in the first stanza of the following poem.*]

Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
The stars they were among my dreams;
In sleep did I behold the skies,
I saw the crackling flashes drive;
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive.

Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain.
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie;
Alone I cannot fear to die.

Alas! you might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon despair o'er me prevailed;
Too soon my heartless spirit failed;
When you were gone my limbs were stronger,
And Oh how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
My friends, when you were gone away.

My child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!

Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange something did I see;
—As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me.
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
Oh mercy! like a little child!

My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.
Oh wind that o'er my head art flying,
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send.
Too soon, my friends, you went away;
For I had many things to say.

I'll follow you across the snow,
You travel heavily and slow:
In spite of all my weary pain,
I'll look upon your tents again.
My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood;
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I,
Then wherefore should I fear to die?

My journey will be shortly run,
I shall not see another sun,
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken child! if I
For once could have thee close to me,
With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thoughts would happy be.
I feel my body die away,
I shall not see another day.

THE CONVICT.

The glory of evening was spread through the west;
—On the slope of a mountain I stood,
While the joy that precedes the calm season of rest
Rang loud through the meadow and wood.

'And must we then part from a dwelling so fair?'
In the pain of my spirit I said,
And with a deep sadness I turned, to repair
To the cell where the convict is laid.

The thick-ribbed walls that o'ershadow the gate
Resound; and the dungeons unfold:
I pause; and at length, through the glimmering grate,
That outcast of pity behold.

His black matted head on his shoulder is bent,
And deep is the sigh of his breath,
And with stedfast dejection his eyes are intent
On the fetters that link him to death.

'Tis sorrow enough on that visage to gaze,
That body dismiss'd from his care;
Yet my fancy has pierced to his heart, and pourtrays
More terrible images there.

His bones are consumed, and his life-blood is dried,
With wishes the past to undo;
And his crime, through the pains that o'erwhelm him, descried,
Still blackens and grows on his view.

When from the dark synod, or blood-reeking field,
To his chamber the monarch is led,
All soothers of sense their soft virtue shall yield,
And quietness pillow his head.

But if grief, self-consumed, in oblivion would doze,
And conscience her tortures appease,
'Mid tumult and uproar this man must repose;
In the comfortless vault of disease.

When his fetters at night have so press'd on his limbs,
That the weight can no longer be borne,
If, while a half-slumber his memory bedims,
The wretch, on his pallet should turn,

While the jail-mastiff howls at the dull clanking chain,
From the roots of his hair there shall start
A thousand sharp punctures of cold-sweating pain,
And terror shall leap at his heart.

But now he half-raises his deep-sunken eye,
And the motion unsettles a tear;
The silence of sorrow it seems to supply,
And asks of me why I am here.

'Poor victim! no idle intruder has stood
'With o'erweening complacence our state to compare,
'But one, whose first wish is the wish to be good,
'Is come as a brother thy sorrows to share.

'At thy name though compassion her nature resign,
'Though in virtue's proud mouth thy report be a stain,
'My care, if the arm of the mighty were mine,
'Would plant thee where yet thou might'st blossom again.'

LINES

WRITTEN A FEW MILES ABOVE

TINTERN ABBEY,

ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE

DURING A TOUR,

July 13, 1798.

FIVE years have passed; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a sweet inland murmur.*—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Among the woods and copses lose themselves,

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb
The wild green landscape. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms
Green to the very door; and wreathes of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees,
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the household woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.

Though absent long,
These forms of beauty have not been to me,
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps,
As may have had no trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life;
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world

Is lighten'd:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft,
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless day-light; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee
O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguish'd thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope

Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led; more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by,)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite: a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains ; and of all that we behold
From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,*
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor, perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay :
For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
Of this fair river ; thou, my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,

* This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young, the exact expression of which I cannot recollect.

My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our chearful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee: and in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; Oh! then
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,
If I should be, where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence, wilt thou then forget

That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake.

APPENDIX

PETER BELL

A Tale in Verse

BY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1819

[Reprint of 1st edition]

PETER BELL.

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ., P.L., ETC. ETC.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The Tale of Peter Bell, which I now introduce to your notice, and to that of the Public, has in its Manuscript state, nearly survived its *minority*;—for it first saw the light in the summer of 1798. During this long interval, pains have been taken at different times to make the production less unworthy of a favourable reception; or, rather, to fit it for filling *permanently* a station, however humble, in the Literature of my Country. This has, indeed, been the aim of all my endeavours in Poetry, which, you know, have been sufficiently laborious to prove that I deem the Art not lightly to be approached; and that the attainment of excellence in it, may laudably be made the principal object of intellectual pursuit by any man, who, with reasonable consideration of circumstances, has faith in his own impulses.

The Poem of Peter Bell, as the Prologue will shew, was composed under a belief that the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but that, though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously, and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents, within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life. Since that Prologue was written, *you* have exhibited most splendid effects of judicious daring, in the opposite and usual course. Let this acknowledgment make my peace with the lovers of the supernatural; and I am persuaded it will be admitted, that to you, as a Master in that province of the art, the following

Tale, whether from contrast or congruity, is a not unappropriate offering. Accept it, then, as a public testimony of affectionate admiration from one with whose name your's has been often coupled (to use your own words) for evil and for good; and believe me to be, with earnest wishes that life and health may be granted you to complete the many important works in which you are engaged, and with high respect,

Most faithfully your's,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, *April* 7, 1819.

PROLOGUE.

THERE's something in a flying horse,
And something in a huge balloon;
But through the clouds I'll never float
Until I have a little Boat,
Whose shape is like the crescent-moon.

And now I *have* a little Boat,
In shape a very crescent-moon:—
Fast through the clouds my Boat can sail;
But if perchance your faith should fail,
Look up—and you shall see me soon!

The woods, my Friends, are round you roaring,
Rocking and roaring like a sea;
The noise of danger fills your ears,
And ye have all a thousand fears
Both for my little Boat and me

Meanwhile I from the helm admire
The pointed horns of my canoe;
And, did not pity touch my breast,
To see how ye are all distrest,
Till my ribs ach'd, I 'd laugh at you!

Away we go, my Boat and I—
Frail man ne'er sate in such another;
Whether among the winds we strive,
Or deep into the heavens we dive,
Each is contented with the other.

Away we go—and what care we
For treasons, tumults, and for wars?
We are as calm in our delight
As is the crescent-moon so bright
Among the scattered stars.

Up goes my Boat between the stars
Through many a breathless field of light,
Through many a long blue field of ether,
Leaving ten thousand stars beneath her,
Up goes my little Boat so bright!

The Crab—the Scorpion—and the Bull—
We pry among them all—have shot
High o'er the red-hair'd race of Mars
Cover'd from top to toe with scars;
Such company I like it not!

The towns in Saturn are ill-built,
But proud let *him* be who has seen them;
The Pleiads, that appear to kiss
Each other in the vast abyss,
With joy I sail between them!

Swift Mercury resounds with mirth,
Great Jove is full of stately bowers;
But these, and all that they contain,
What are they to that tiny grain,
That darling speck of ours?

Then back to Earth, the dear green Earth;
Whole ages if I here should roam,
The world for my remarks and me
Would not a whit the better be;
I 've left my heart at home.

And there it is, the matchless Earth!
There spreads the fam'd Pacific Ocean!
Old Andes thrusts yon craggy spear
Through the grey clouds—the Alps are here
Like waters in commotion!

Yon tawny slip is Lybia's sands—
That silver thread the river Dnieper—
And look, where cloth'd in brightest green
Is a sweet Isle, of isles the queen;
Ye fairies from all evil keep her!

And see the town where I was born!
Around those happy fields we span
In boyish gambols—I was lost
Where I have been, but on this coast
I feel I am a man.

Never did fifty things at once
Appear so lovely, never, never,—
How tunefully the forests ring!
To hear the earth's soft murmuring
Thus could I hang for ever!

'Shame on you,' cried my little Boat,
'Was ever such a heartless loon,
Within a living Boat to sit,
And make no better use of it,
A Boat twin-sister of the crescent-moon!

Out—out—and, like a brooding hen,
Beside your sooty hearth-stone cower;
Go, creep along the dirt, and pick
Your way with your good walking-stick,
Just three good miles an hour!

Ne'er in the breast of full-grown Poet
Flutter'd so faint a heart before—
Was it the music of the spheres
That overpower'd your mortal ears?
—Such din shall trouble them no more.

These nether precincts do not lack
Charms of their own;—then come with me—
I want a comrade, and for you
There's nothing that I would not do;
Nought is there that you shall not see.

Haste! and above Siberian snows
We'll sport amid the boreal morning,
Will mingle with her lustres gliding
Among the stars, the stars now hiding
And now the stars adorning.

I know the secrets of a land
Where human foot did never stray;
Fair is the land as evening skies,
And cool,—though in the depth it lies
Of burning Africa.'

Or we 'll into the realm of Faery,
Among the lovely shades of things ;
The shadowy forms of mountains bare,
And streams, and bowers, and ladies fair ;
The shades of palaces and kings !

Or, if you thirst with hardy zeal
Less quiet regions to explore,
Prompt voyage shall to you reveal
How earth and heaven are taught to feel
The might of magic lore ! '

' My little vagrant Form of light,
My gay and beautiful Canoe,
Well have you play'd your friendly part ;
As kindly take what from my heart
Experience forces—then adieu !

Temptation lurks among your words ;
But, while these pleasures you 're pursuing
Without impediment or let,
My radiant Pinnace, you forget
What on the earth is doing.

There was a time when all mankind
Did listen with a faith sincere
To tuneful tongues in mystery vers'd ;
Then Poets fearlessly rehears'd
The wonders of a wild career.

Go—but the world 's a sleepy world
And 'tis, I fear, an age too late ;
Take with you some ambitious Youth,
For I myself, in very truth,
Am all unfit to be your mate.

Long have I lov'd what I behold,
The night that calms, the day that cheers:
The common growth of mother earth
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.

The dragon's wing, the magic ring,
I shall not covet for my dower,
If I along that lowly way
With sympathetic heart may stray
And with a soul of power.

These given, what more need I desire,
To stir—to soothe—or elevate?
What nobler marvels than the mind
May in life's daily prospect find,
May find or there create?

A potent wand doth Sorrow wield;
What spell so strong as guilty Fear!
Repentance is a tender sprite;
If aught on earth have heavenly might,
'Tis lodg'd within her silent tear.

But grant my wishes,—let us now
Descend from this ethereal height;
Then take thy way, adventurous Skiff,
More daring far than Hippogriff,
And be thy own delight!

To the stone-table in my garden,
Lov'd haunt of many a summer hour,
The Squire is come;—his daughter Bess
Beside him in the cool recess
Sits blooming like a flower.

With these are many more convened;
They know not I have been so far—
I see them there in number nine
Beneath the spreading Weymouth pine—
I see them—there they are!

There sits the Vicar, and his Dame;
And there my good friend, Stephen Otter;
And, ere the light of evening fail,
To them I must relate the Tale
Of Peter Bell the Potter.'

Off flew my sparkling Boat in scorn,
Yea in a trance of indignation!
And I, as well as I was able,
On two poor legs, to my stone-table
Limp'd on with some vexation.

'O, here he is!' cried little Bess—
She saw me at the garden door,
'We've waited anxiously and long,'
They cried, and all around me throng,
Full nine of them, or more!

'Reproach me not—your fears be still—
'Be thankful we again have met;—
'Resume, my Friends! within the shade
'Your seats, and promptly shall be paid
'The well-remembered debt.'

Breath fail'd me as I spake—but soon
With lips, no doubt, and visage pale,
And sore too from a slight contusion,
Did I, to cover my confusion,
Begin the *promised* Tale.

PART FIRST.

All by the moonlight river side
It gave three miserable groans;
'Tis come then to a pretty pass,'
Said Peter to the groaning Ass,
'But I will *bang* your bones!'

'Good Sir!'—the Vicar's voice exclaim'd,
'You rush at once into the middle;'
And little Bess, with accent sweeter,
Cried, 'O dear Sir! but who is Peter?'
Said Stephen,—'Tis a downright riddle!'

The Squire said, 'Sure as paradise
'Was lost to man by Adam's sinning,
'This leap is for us all too bold;
'Who Peter was, let that be told,
'And start from the beginning.'

—— A potter, Sir, he was by trade,
Said I, becoming quite collected;
And, wheresoever he appeared,
Full twenty times was Peter feared
For once that Peter was respected.

He two and thirty years or more
Had been a wild and woodland rover;
Had heard the Atlantic surges roar
On farthest Cornwall's rocky shore,
And trod the cliffs of Dover.

And he had seen Caernarvon's towers,
And well he knew the spire of Sarum;
And he had been where Lincoln bell
Flings o'er the fen its ponderous knell,
Its far-renowned alarum!

At Doncaster, at York, and Leeds,
And merry Carlisle had he been;
And all along the Lowlands fair,
All through the bonny shire of Ayr—
And far as Aberdeen.

And he had been at Inverness;
And Peter, by the mountain rills,
Had danced his round with Highland lasses;
And he had lain beside his asses
On lofty Cheviot Hills:

And he had trudg'd through Yorkshire dales,
Among the rocks and winding *scars*;
Where deep and low the hamlets lie
Beneath their little patch of sky
And little lot of stars:

And all along the indented coast,
Bespattered with the salt-sea foam;
Where'er a knot of houses lay,
On headland, or in hollow bay;—
Sure never man like him did roam!

As well might Peter, in the Fleet,
Have been fast bound, a begging debtor;—
He travelled here, he travelled there;—
But not the value of a hair
Was heart or head the better.

He rov'd among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day,—
But Nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

Small change it made in Peter's heart
To see his gentle pannier'd train
With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
Where'er the tender grass was leading
Its earliest green along the lane.

In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter, on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

At noon, when by the forest's edge,
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart,—he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky!

On a fair prospect some have look'd
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as stedfast as the scene
On which they gaz'd themselves away.

With Peter Bell, I need not tell
That this had never been the case;—
He was a Carl as wild and rude
As ever hue-and-cry pursued,
As ever ran a felon's race.

Of all that lead a lawless life,
Of all that love their lawless lives,
In city or in village small,
He was the wildest far of all;—
He had a dozen wedded wives.—

Nay start not!—wedded wives—and twelve!
But how one wife could e'er come near him,
In simple truth I cannot tell;
For be it said of Peter Bell
To see him was to fear him.

Though Nature could not touch his heart
By lovely forms and silent weather,
And tender sounds, yet you might see
At once that Peter Bell and she
Had often been together.

A savage wildness round him hung
As of a dweller out of doors;
In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen,
Of mountains and of dreary moors.

To all the unshap'd half human thoughts
Which solitary Nature feeds
'Mid summer storms or winter's ice,
Had Peter join'd whatever vice
The cruel city breeds.

His face was keen as is the wind
That cuts along the hawthorn fence;
Of courage you saw little there,
But, in its stead, a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence.

He had a dark and sidelong walk,
And long and slouching was his gait;
Beneath his looks so bare and bold,
You might perceive, his spirit cold
Was playing with some inward bait.

His forehead wrinkled was and furr'd;
A work one half of which was done
By thinking of his *whens* and *hows*;
And half by knitting of his brows
Beneath the glaring sun.

There was a hardness in his cheek,
There was a hardness in his eye,
As if the man had fix'd his face,
In many a solitary place,
Against the wind and open sky!

One night, (and now, my little Bess!
We 've reach'd at last the promis'd Tale;)
One beautiful November night,
When the full moon was shining bright
Upon the rapid river Swale,

Along the river's winding banks
Peter was travelling all alone;—
Whether to buy or sell, or led
By pleasure running in his head,
To me was never known.

He trudg'd along through copse and brake,
He trudg'd along o'er hill and dale;
Nor for the moon car'd he a tittle,
And for the stars he car'd as little,
And for the murmuring river Swale.

But chancing to espy a path
That promis'd to cut short the way;
As many a wiser man hath done,
He left a trusty guide for one
That might his steps betray.

To a thick wood he soon is brought
Where cheerfully his course he weaves,
And whistling loud may yet be heard,
Though often buried, like a bird
Darkling among the boughs and leaves.

But quickly Peter's mood is chang'd,
And on he drives with cheeks that burn
In downright fury and in wrath—
There 's little sign the treacherous path
Will to the road return!

The path grows dim, and dimmer still;
Now up—now down—the rover wends
With all the sail that he can carry;
Till he is brought to an old quarry,
And there the pathway ends.

'What! would'st thou daunt me grisly den?
'Back must I, having come so far?
'Stretch as thou wilt thy gloomy jaws,
'I'll on, nor would I give two straws
'For lantern or for star!'

And so, where on the huge rough stones
The black and massy shadows lay,
And through the dark, and through the cold,
And through the yawning fissures old,
Did Peter boldly press his way

Right through the quarry;—and behold
A scene of soft and lovely hue!
Where blue, and grey, and tender green,
Together made as sweet a scene
As ever human eye did view.

Beneath the clear blue sky he saw
A little field of meadow ground;
But field or meadow name it not;
Call it of earth a small green plot,
With rocks encompass'd round.

The Swale flow'd under the grey rocks,
But he flow'd quiet and unseen;—
You need a strong and stormy gale
To bring the noises of the Swale
To that green spot, so calm and green!

Now you 'll suppose that Peter Bell
Felt small temptation here to tarry,
And so it was,—but I must add,
His heart was not a little glad
When he was out of the old quarry.

And is there no one dwelling here,
No hermit with his beads and glass?
And does no little cottage look
Upon this soft and fertile nook?
Does no one live near this green grass?

Across that deep and quiet spot
Is Peter driving through the grass—
And now he is among the trees;
When, turning round his head, he sees
A solitary Ass.

'No doubt I'm founder'd in these woods—
'For once,' quoth he, 'I will be wise,
'With better speed I'll back again—
'And, lest the journey should prove vain,
'Will take yon Ass, my lawful prize!'

Off Peter hied,—'A comely beast!
'Though not so plump as he might be;
'My honest friend, with such a platter,
'You should have been a little fatter
'But come, Sir, come with me!'

But first doth Peter deem it fit
To spy about him far and near;
There's not a single house in sight,
No woodman's hut, no cottage light—
Peter you need not fear!

There's nothing to be seen but woods
And rocks that spread a hoary gleam,
And this one beast that from the bed
Of the green meadow hangs his head
Over the silent stream.

His head is with a halter bound;
The halter seizing, Peter leapt
Upon the Ass's back, and plied
With ready heel the creature's side;
But still the Ass his station kept.

'What 's this?' cried Peter, brandishing
A new-peel'd sapling white as cream;
The Ass knew well what Peter said,
But, as before, hung down his head
Over the silent stream.

Then Peter gave a sudden jirk,
A jirk that from a dungeon floor
Would have pulled up an iron ring;
But still the heavy-headed thing
Stood just as he had stood before!

Quoth Peter, leaping from his seat,
'There is some plot against me laid;'
Once more the little meadow ground
And all the hoary cliffs around
He cautiously survey'd.

All, all is silent, rocks and woods,
All still and silent—far and near;
Only the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turns round his long left ear.

Thought Peter, What can mean all this?—
Some ugly witchcraft must be here!
Once more the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turn'd round his long left ear.

'I 'll cure you of these desperate tricks'—
And, with deliberate action slow,
His staff high-raising, in the pride
Of skill, upon the Ass's hide
He dealt a sturdy blow.

What followed?—yielding to the shock
The Ass, as if to take his ease,
In quiet uncomplaining mood
Upon the spot where he had stood
Dropt gently down upon his knees.

And then upon his side he fell
And by the river's brink did lie
And, as he lay like one that mourn'd,
The patient beast on Peter turn'd
His shining hazel eye.

'Twas but one mild, reproachful look,
A look more tender than severe;
And straight in sorrow, not in dread,
He turn'd the eye-ball in his head
Towards the river deep and clear.

Upon the beast the sapling rings,—
Heav'd his lank sides, his limbs they stirr'd
He gave a groan—and then another,
Of that which went before the brother,
And then he gave a third:

All by the moonlight river side
He gave three miserable groans,
'"Tis come then to a pretty pass,'
Said Peter to the groaning ass,
'But I will *bang* your bones!'

And Peter halts to gather breath,
And now full clearly was it shown
(What he before in part had seen)
How gaunt was the poor Ass and lean,
Yea wasted to a skeleton!

With legs stretched out and stiff he lay:—
No word of kind commiseration
Fell at the sight from Peter's tongue;
With hard contempt his heart was wrung,
With hatred and vexation.

The meagre beast lay still as death—
And Peter's lips with fury quiver—
Quoth he, 'You little mulish dog,
'I'll fling your carcase like a log
'Head foremost down the river!'

An impious oath confirmed the threat—
But, while upon the ground he lay,
To all the echoes, south and north,
And east and west, the Ass sent forth
A loud and piteous bray!

This outcry, on the heart of Peter,
Seems like a note of joy to strike,—
Joy on the heart of Peter knocks;—
But in the echo of the rocks
Was something Peter did not like.

Whether to cheer his coward breast,
Or that he could not break the chain,
In this serene and solemn hour,
Twin'd round him by demoniac power,
To the blind work he turn'd again.—

Among the rocks and winding crags—
Among the mountains far away—
Once more the Ass did lengthen out
More ruefully an endless shout,
The long dry see-saw of his horrible bray!

What is there now in Peter's heart?
Or whence the might of this strange sound?
The moon uneasy look'd and dimmer,
The broad blue heavens appear'd to glimmer,
And the rocks stagger'd all around.

From Peter's hand the sapling dropp'd!
Threat has he none to execute—
'If any one should come and see
'That I am here, they'll think,' quoth he,
'I'm helping this poor dying brute.'

He scans the Ass from limb to limb;
And Peter now uplifts his eyes;—
Steady the moon doth look and clear,
And like themselves the rocks appear
And tranquil are the skies.

Whereat, in resolute mood, once more
He stoops the Ass's neck to seize—
Foul purpose, quickly put to flight!
For in the pool a startling sight
Meets him, beneath the shadowy trees.

Is it the moon's distorted face?
The ghost-like image of a cloud?
Is it a gallows there pourtray'd?
Is Peter of himself afraid?
Is it a coffin,—or a shroud?

A grisly idol hewn in stone?
Or imp from witch's lap let fall?
Or a gay ring of shining fairies,
Such as pursue their brisk vagaries
In sylvan bower, or haunted hall?

Is it a fiend that to a stake
Of fire his desperate self is tethering?
Or stubborn spirit doom'd to yell
In solitary ward or cell,
Ten thousand miles from all his brethren?

Is it a party in a parlour?
Cramm'd just as they on earth were cramm'd—
Some sipping punch, some sipping tea,
But, as you by their faces see,
All silent and all damn'd!

A throbbing pulse the Gazer hath—
Puzzled he was, and now is daunted;
He looks, he cannot choose but look;
Like one intent upon a book—
A book that is enchanted.

Ah, well-a-day for Peter Bell!—
He will be turned to iron soon,
Meet Statue for the court of Fear!
His hat is up—and every hair
Bristles—and whitens in the moon!

He looks—he ponders—looks again;
He sees a motion—hears a groan;—
His eyes will burst—his heart will break—
He gives a loud and frightful shriek,
And drops, a senseless weight, as if his life were flown!

PART SECOND.

We left our Hero in a trance,
Beneath the alders, near the river;
The Ass is by the river side,
And, where the feeble breezes glide,
Upon the stream the moon-beams quiver.

A happy respite!—but he wakes;—
And feels the glimmering of the moon—
And to stretch forth his hands is trying;—
Sure, when he knows where he is lying,
He 'll sink into a second swoon.

He lifts his head—he sees his staff;
He touches—'tis to him a treasure!
Faint recollection seems to tell
That he is yet where mortals dwell—
A thought receiv'd with languid pleasure!

His head upon his elbow propp'd,
Becoming less and less perplex'd
Sky-ward he looks—to rock and wood—
And then—upon the placid flood
His wandering eye is fix'd.

Thought he, that is the face of one
In his last sleep securely bound!
So, faltering not in *this* intent,
He makes his staff an instrument
The river's depth to sound—

Now—like a tempest-shatter'd bark
That overwhelm'd and prostrate lies
And in a moment to the verge
Is lifted of a foaming surge—
Full suddenly the Ass doth rise!

His staring bones all shake with joy—
And close by Peter's side he stands:
While Peter o'er the river bends,
The little Ass his neck extends,
And fondly licks his hands.

Such life is in the Ass's eyes—
Such life is in his limbs and ears—
That Peter Bell, if he had been
The veriest coward ever seen,
Must now have thrown aside his fears.

The Ass looks on—and to his work
Is Peter quietly resign'd;
He touches here—he touches there—
And now among the dead man's hair
His sapling Peter has entwin'd.

He pulls—and looks—and pulls again,
And he whom the poor Ass had lost,
The man who had been four days dead,
Head foremost from the river's bed
Uprises—like a ghost!

And Peter draws him to dry land;
And through the brain of Peter pass
Some poignant twitches, fast and faster,
'No doubt,' quoth he, 'he is the master
'Of this poor miserable Ass!'

The meagre Shadow all this while—
What aim is his? what is he doing?
His sudden fit of joy is flown,—
He on his knees hath laid him down,
As if he were his grief renewing.

That Peter on his back should mount
He shows a wish, well as he can,
'I 'll go, I 'll go, whate'er betide—
'He to his home my way will guide,
'The cottage of the drowned man.'

This utter'd, Peter mounts forthwith
Upon the pleas'd and thankful Ass;
And then, without a moment's stay,
The earnest creature turn'd away,
Leaving the body on the grass.

Intent upon his faithful watch
The beast four days and nights had pass'd;
A sweeter meadow ne'er was seen,
And there the Ass four days had been,
Nor ever once did break his fast!

Yet firm his step, and stout his heart;
The mead is cross'd—the quarry's mouth
Is reach'd—but there the trusty guide
Into a thicket turns aside,
And takes his way towards the south.

When hark, a burst of doleful sound!
And Peter honestly might say,
The like came never to his ears
Though he has been full thirty years
A rover night and day!

'Tis not a plover of the moors,
'Tis not a bittern of the fen;
Nor can it be a barking fox—
Nor night-bird chambered in the rocks—
Nor wild-cat in a woody glen!

The Ass is startled—and stops short
Right in the middle of the thicket;
And Peter, wont to whistle loud
Whether alone or in a crowd,
Is silent as a silent cricket.

What ails you now, my little Bess?
Well may you tremble and look grave!
This cry—that rings along the wood,
This cry—that floats adown the flood,
Comes from the entrance of a cave:

I see a blooming Wood-boy there,
And, if I had the power to say
How sorrowful the wanderer is,
Your heart would be as sad as his
Till you had kiss'd his tears away!

Holding a hawthorn branch in hand,
All bright with berries ripe and red;
Into the cavern's mouth he peeps—
Thence back into the moon-light creeps;
What seeks the boy?—the silent dead!

His father!—Him doth he require,
Whom he hath sought with fruitless pains,
Among the rocks, behind the trees,
Now creeping on his hands and knees,
Now running o'er the open plains.

And hither is he come at last,
When he through such a day has gone,
By this dark cave to be distrest
Like a poor bird—her plunder'd nest
Hovering around with dolorous moan!

Of that intense and piercing cry
The listening Ass doth rightly spell;
Wild as it is he there can read
Some intermingl'd notes that plead
With touches irresistible;

But Peter, when he saw the Ass
Not only stop but turn, and change
The cherish'd tenor of his pace
That lamentable noise to chase,
It wrought in him conviction strange;

A faith that, for the dead man's sake
And this poor slave who lov'd him well,
Vengeance upon his head will fall,
Some visitation worse than all
Which ever till this night befel.

Meanwhile the Ass to gain his end
In striving stoutly as he may;
But, while he climbs the woody hill,
The cry grows weak—and weaker still,
And now at last it dies away!

So with his freight the creature turns
Into a gloomy grove of beech,
Along the shade with footstep true
Descending slowly, till the two
The open moonlight reach.

And there, along a narrow dell,
A fair smooth pathway you discern,
A length of green and open road—
As if it from a fountain flowed—
Winding away between the fern.

The rocks that tower on either side
Build up a wild fantastic scene;
Temples like those among the Hindoos,
And mosques, and spires, and abbey windows,
And castles all with ivy green!

And, while the Ass pursues his way,
Along this solitary dell,
As pensively his steps advance,
The mosques and spires change countenance,
And look at Peter Bell!

That unintelligible cry
Hath left him high in preparation,—
Convinced that he, or soon or late,
This very night, will meet his fate—
And so he sits in expectation!

The verdant pathway, in and out,
Winds upwards like a straggling chain;
And, when two toilsome miles are past,
Up through the rocks it leads at last
Into a high and open plain.

The strenuous animal hath clomb
With the green path,—and now he wends
Where, shining like the smoothest sea,
In undisturbed immensity
The level plain extends.

How blank !—but whence this rustling sound
Which, all too long, the pair hath chased !
—A dancing leaf is close behind,
Light plaything for the sportive wind
Upon that solitary waste.

When Peter spies the withered leaf,
It yields no cure to his distress—
'Where there is not a bush or tree,
'The very leaves they follow me—
'So huge hath been my wickedness !'

To a close lane they now are come,
Where, as before, the enduring Ass
Moves on without a moment's stop,
Nor once turns round his head to crop
A bramble leaf or blade of grass.

Between the hedges as they go
The white dust sleeps upon the lane ;
And Peter, ever and anon
Back-looking, sees upon a stone
Or in the dust, a crimson stain.

A stain—as of a drop of blood
By moonlight made more faint and wan—
Ha ! why this comfortless despair ?
He knows not how the blood comes there,
And Peter is a wicked man.

At length he spies a bleeding wound,
Where he had struck the Ass's head ;
He sees the blood, knows what it is,—
A glimpse of sudden joy was his,
But then it quickly fled ;

Of him whom sudden death has seized
He thought,—of thee, O faithful Ass!
And once again those darting pains,
As meteors shoot through heaven's wide plains,
Pass through his bosom—and repass!

PART THIRD.

I 've heard of one, a gentle soul,
Though given to sadness and to gloom,
And for the fact will vouch, one night
It chanced that by a taper's light
This man was reading in his room;

Reading, as you or I might read
At night in any pious book,
When sudden blackness overspread
The snow-white page on which he read,
And made the good man round him look.

The chamber walls were dark all round,—
And to his book he turn'd again;
—The light had left the good man's taper,
And form'd itself upon the paper,
Into large letters—bright and plain!

The godly book was in his hand—
And, on the page more black than coal,
Appeared, set forth in strange array,
A *word*—which to his dying day
Perplex'd the good man's gentle soul.

The ghostly word, which thus was fram'd,
Did never from his lips depart;
But he hath said, poor gentle wight!
It brought full many a sin to light
Out of the bottom of his heart.

Dread Spirits! to torment the good
Why wander from your course so far,
Disordering colour form and stature!
—Let good men feel the soul of Nature,
And see things as they are.

I know you, potent Spirits! well,
How, with the feeling and the sense
Playing, ye govern foes or friends,
Yok'd to your will, for fearful ends—
And this I speak in reverence!

But might I give advice to you,
Whom in my fear I love so well,
From men of pensive virtue go,
Dread Beings! and your empire show
On hearts like that of Peter Bell.

Your presence I have often felt
In darkness and the stormy night;
And well I know, if need there be,
Ye can put forth your agency
When earth is calm, and heaven is bright.

Then, coming from the wayward world,
That powerful world in which ye dwell,
Come, Spirits of the Mind! and try
To-night, beneath the moonlight sky,
What may be done with Peter Bell!

—O, would that some more skilful voice,
My further labour might prevent!
Kind listeners, that around me sit,
I feel that I am all unfit
For such high argument.

I've play'd and danc'd with my narration—
I loiter'd long ere I began;
Ye waited then on my good pleasure,—
Pour out indulgence still, in measure
As liberal as ye can!

Our travellers, ye remember well,
Are thridding a sequester'd lane;
And Peter many tricks is trying,
And many anodynes applying,
To ease his conscience of its pain.

By this his heart is lighter far;
And, finding that he can account
So clearly for that crimson stain,
His evil spirit up again
Does like an empty bucket mount.

And Peter is a deep logician
Who hath no lack of wit mercurial;
'Blood drops—leaves rustle—yet,' quoth he,
'This poor man never, but for me,
'Could have had Christian burial.

'And, say the best you can, 'tis plain
'That here hath been some wicked dealing;
'No doubt the devil in me wrought;—
'I'm not the man who could have thought
'An Ass like this was worth the stealing!'

So from his pocket Peter takes
His shining horn tobacco-box,
And, in a light and careless way
As men who with their purpose play,
Upon the lid he knocks.

Let them whose voice can stop the clouds—
Whose cunning eye can see the wind—
Tell to a curious world the cause
Why, making here a sudden pause,
The Ass turn'd round his head—and *grinn'd.*

Appalling process!—I have mark'd
The like on heath—in lonely wood,
And, verily, have seldom met
A spectacle more hideous—yet
It suited Peter's present mood.

And, grinning in his turn, his teeth
He in jocose defiance show'd—
When, to confound his spiteful mirth,
A murmur, pent within the earth,
In the dead earth beneath the road,

Roll'd audibly!—it swept along—
A muffled noise—a rumbling sound!
'Twas by a troop of miners made,
Plying with gunpowder their trade,
Some twenty fathoms under ground.

Small cause of dire effect!—for, surely,
If ever mortal, King or Cotter,
Believed that earth was charg'd to quake
And yawn for his unworthy sake,
'Twas Peter Bell the Potter!

But, as an oak in breathless air
Will stand though to the centre hewn,
Or as the weakest things, if frost
Have stiffen'd them, maintain their post,
So he, beneath the gazing moon!—

But now the pair have reach'd a spot
Where, shelter'd by a rocky cove,
A little chapel stands alone,
With greenest ivy overgrown,
And tufted with an ivy grove.

Dying insensibly away
From human thoughts and purposes,
The building seems, wall, roof, and tower,
To bow to some transforming power,
And blend with the surrounding trees.

Deep sighing as he pass'd along,
Quoth Peter, 'In the shire of Fife,
''Mid such a ruin, following still
'From land to land a lawless will,
'I married my sixth wife!'

The unheeding Ass moves slowly on,
And now is passing by an inn
Brim-full of a carousing crew,
Making, with curses not a few,
An uproar and a drunken din.

I cannot well express the thoughts
Which Peter in those noises found;—
A stifling power compressed his frame,
As if confusing darkness came
Over that dull and dreary sound.

For well did Peter know the sound;
The language of those drunken joys
To him, a jovial soul I ween,
But a few hours ago had been
A gladsome and a welcome noise.

Now, turn'd adrift into the past,
He finds no solace in his course;—
Like planet-stricken men of yore
He trembles, smitten to the core
By strong compunction and remorse.

But more than all, his heart is stung
To think of one, almost a child;
A sweet and playful Highland girl,
As light and beauteous as a squirrel,
As beauteous and as wild!

A lonely house her dwelling was,
A cottage in a heathy dell;
And she put on her gown of green,
And left her mother at sixteen,
And followed Peter Bell.

But many good and pious thoughts
Had she; and, in the kirk to pray,
Two long Scotch miles, through rain or snow,
To kirk she had been used to go,
Twice every sabbath-day.

And, when she followed Peter Bell,
It was to lead an honest life;
For he, with tongue not used to falter,
Had pledg'd his troth before the altar
To love her as his wedded wife.

A mother's hope is her's;—but soon
She droop'd and pin'd like one forlorn;—
From Scripture she a name did borrow;
Benoni, or the child of sorrow,
She call'd her babe unborn.

For she had learn'd how Peter liv'd,
And took it in most grievous part!
She to the very bone was worn,
And, ere that little child was born,
Died of a broken heart.

And now the Spirits of the Mind
Are busy with poor Peter Bell;
Distraction reigns in soul and sense,
And reason drops in impotence
From her deserted pinnacle!

Close by a brake of flowering furze
(Above it shivering aspins play)
He sees an unsubstantial creature,
His very self in form and feature,
Not four yards from the broad highway;

And stretch'd beneath the furze he sees
The Highland girl—it is no other;
And hears her crying, as she cried
The very moment that she died,
'My mother! oh my mother!'

The sweat pours down from Peter's face,
So grievous is his heart's contrition;
With agony his eye-balls ache
While he beholds by the furze-brake
This miserable vision!

Calm is the well-deserving brute,
His peace, hath no offence betray'd ;—
But now, while down that slope he wends,
A voice to Peter's ears ascends,
Resounding from the woody glade :

Though clamorous as a hunter's horn
Re-echoed from a naked rock,
'Tis from that tabernacle—List !
Within, a fervent Methodist
Is preaching to no heedless flock.

'Repent ! repent !' he cries aloud,
'While yet ye may find mercy ;—strive
'To love the Lord with all your might ;
'Turn to him, seek him day and night,
'And save your souls alive !

'Repent ! repent ! though ye have gone
'Through paths of wickedness and woe
'After the Babylonian harlot,
'And though your sins be red as scarlet
'They shall be white as snow !'

Even as he pass'd the door, these words
Did plainly come to Peter's ears ;
And they such joyful tidings were
The joy was more than he could bear—
He melted into tears.

Sweet tears of hope and tenderness !
And fast they fell, a plenteous shower ;
His nerves, his sinews seemed to melt ;
Through all his iron frame was felt
A gentle, a relaxing power !

Each fibre of his frame was weak,
Weak all the animal within,
But in its helplessness grew mild
And gentle as an infant child,
An infant that has known no sin.

'Tis said, that through prevailing grace
He not unmov'd did notice now
The cross * upon thy shoulders scored
Meek beast! in memory of the Lord
To whom all human-kind shall bow;

In memory of that solemn day
When Jesus humbly deign'd to ride
Entering the proud Jerusalem,
By an immeasurable stream
Of shouting people deified!

Meanwhile the persevering Ass,
Towards a gate in open view
Turns up a narrow lane; his chest
Against the yielding gate he press'd,
And quietly pass'd through.

And up the stony lane he goes;
No ghost more softly ever trod;
Among the stones and pebbles, he
Sets down his hoofs inaudibly,
As if with felt his hoofs were shod.

Along the lane the trusty Ass
Had gone two hundred yards, not more;
When to a lonely house he came;
He turn'd aside towards the same
And stopp'd before the door.

* The notion is very general, that the Cross on the back and shoulders of this Animal has the origin here alluded to.

Thought Peter, 'tis the poor man's home!
He listens—not a sound is heard
Save from the trickling household rill;
But, stepping o'er the cottage-sill,
Forthwith a little girl appear'd.

She to the meeting-house was bound
In hope some tidings there to gather—
No glimpse it is—no doubtful gleam—
She saw—and utter'd with a scream,
'My father! here's my father!'

The very word was plainly heard,
Heard plainly by the wretched Mother—
Her joy was like a deep affright;
And forth she rush'd into the light,
And saw it was another!

And instantly, upon the earth
Beneath the full-moon shining bright,
Close at the Ass's feet she fell;
At the same moment Peter Bell
Dismounts in most unhappy plight.

What could he do?—The Woman lay
Breathless and motionless;—the mind
Of Peter sadly was confus'd;
But, though to such demands unus'd,
And helpless almost as the blind,

He rais'd her up; and, while he held
Her body propp'd against his knee,
The Woman wak'd—and when she spied
The poor Ass standing by her side,
She moan'd most bitterly.

'Oh! God be prais'd—my heart 's at ease—
'For he is dead—I know it well!'
—At this she wept a bitter flood;
And, in the best way that he could,
His tale did Peter tell.

He trembles—he is pale as death—
His voice is weak with perturbation—
He turns aside his head—he pauses;
Poor Peter from a thousand causes
Is crippled sore in his narration.

At length she learn'd how he espied
The Ass in that small meadow ground;
And that her husband now lay dead,
Beside that luckless river's bed
In which he had been drown'd.

A piercing look the sufferer cast
Upon the beast that near her stands;
She sees 'tis he, that 'tis the same;
She calls the poor Ass by his name,
And wrings, and wrings her hands.

'O wretched loss!—untimely stroke!
'If he had died upon his bed!
'—He knew not one forewarning pain—
'He never will come home again—
'Is dead—for ever dead!'

Beside the Woman Peter stands;
His heart is opening more and more;
A holy sense pervades his mind;
He feels what he for human kind
Had never felt before.

At length, by Peter's arm sustain'd,
The Woman rises from the ground—
'Oh, mercy! something must be done,—
'My little Rachael, you must run,
'Some willing neighbour must be found.

'Make haste—my little Rachael—do!
'The first you meet with bid him come,—
'Ask him to lend his horse to-night,—
'And this good man, whom Heaven requite,
'Will help to bring the body home.'

Away goes Rachael weeping loud;—
An infant, waked by her distress,
Makes in the house a piteous cry,—
And Peter hears the Mother sigh,—
'Seven are they, and all fatherless!'

And now is Peter taught to feel
That man's heart is a holy thing;
And Nature, through a world of death,
Breathes into him a second breath,
More searching than the breath of spring.

Upon a stone the Woman sits
In agony of silent grief—
From his own thoughts did Peter start;
He longs to press her to his heart,
From love that cannot find relief.

But rous'd, as if through every limb
Had pass'd a sudden shock of dread,
The Mother o'er the threshold flies,
And up the cottage stairs she hies,
And to the pillow gives her burning head.

And Peter turns his steps aside
Into a shade of darksome trees,
Where he sits down, he knows not how,
With his hands press'd against his brow,
And resting on his tremulous knees.

There, self-involv'd, does Peter sit
Until no sign of life he makes,
As if his mind were sinking deep
Through years that have been long asleep!
The trance is past away—he wakes,—

He turns his head—and sees the Ass
Yet standing in the clear moonshine,
'When shall I be as good as thou?
'Oh! would, poor beast, that I had now
'A heart but half as good as thine!'

—But *He*—who deviously hath sought
His father through the lonesome woods,
Hath sought, proclaiming to the ear
Of night, his inward grief and fear—
He comes—escaped from field and floods;—

With weary pace is drawing nigh—
He sees the Ass—and nothing living
Had ever such a fit of joy
As had this little orphan Boy,
For he has no misgiving!

Towards the gentle Ass he springs,
And up about his neck he climbs;
In loving words he talks to him,
He kisses, kisses face and limb,—
He kisses him a thousand times!

This Peter sees, while in the shade
He stood beside the cottage door:
And Peter Bell, the ruffian wild,
Sobs loud, he sobs even like a child,
'Oh! God, I can endure no more!'

—Here ends my Tale:—for in a trice
Arrived a neighbour with his horse;
Peter went forth with him straightway;
And, with due care, ere break of day
Together they brought back the Corse.

And many years did this poor Ass,
Whom once it was my luck to see
Cropping the shrubs of Leming-Lane,
Help by his labour to maintain
The Widow and her family.

And Peter Bell, who, till that night,
Had been the wildest of his clan,
Forsook his crimes, repressed his folly,
And, after ten months' melancholy,
Became a good and honest man.

THE THREE GRAVES.

A FRAGMENT OF A SEXTON'S TALE.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The Author has published the following humble fragment, encouraged by the decisive recommendation of more than one of our most celebrated living Poets. The language was intended to be dramatic; that is suited to the narrator; and the metre corresponds to the homeliness of the diction. It is therefore presented as the fragment, not of a Poem, but of a common Ballad-tale. Whether this is sufficient to justify the adoption of such a style, in any metrical composition not professedly ludicrous, the Author is himself in some doubt. At all events, it is not presented as poetry, and it is in no way connected with the Author's judgment concerning poetic diction. Its merits, if any, are exclusively psychological. The story which must be supposed to have been narrated in the first and second parts is as follows [1817]:—

Edward, a young farmer, meets at the house of Ellen her bosom-friend Mary, and commences an acquaintance, which ends in a mutual attachment. With her consent, and by the advice of their common friend Ellen, he announces his hopes and intentions to Mary's mother, a widow-woman bordering on her fortieth year, and from constant health, the possession of a competent property, and from having had no other children but Mary and another daughter (the father died in their infancy), retaining for the greater part her personal attractions and comeliness of appearance; but a woman of low education and violent temper. The answer which she at once returned to Edward's application was remarkable:—'Well, Edward! you are a handsome young fellow, and you shall have my daughter.' From this time all their wooing passed under the mother's eye; and, in fine, she became herself

enamoured of her future son-in-law, and practised every art both of endearment and of calumny, to transfer his affections from her daughter to herself. (The outlines of the Tale are positive facts, and of no very distant date, though the Author has purposely altered the names and the scene of action, as well as invented the characters of the parties and the detail of the incidents.) Edward, however, though perplexed by her strange retractions from her daughter's good qualities, yet in the innocence of his own heart still mistaking her increasing fondness for motherly affection; she at length, overcome by her miserable passion, after much abuse of Mary's temper and moral tendencies, exclaimed with violent emotion—'O Edward! indeed, indeed, she is not fit for you—she has not a heart to love you as you deserve. It is I that love you! Marry me, Edward! and I will this very day settle all my property on you.' The Lover's eyes were now opened; and thus taken by surprise, whether from the effect of the horror which he felt, acting as it were hysterically on his nervous system, or that at the first moment he lost the sense of the guilt of the proposal in the feeling of its strangeness and absurdity, he flung her from him and burst into a fit of laughter. Irritated by this almost to frenzy, the woman fell on her knees, and in a loud voice that approached to a scream, she prayed for a curse both on him and on her own child. Mary happened to be in the room directly above them, heard Edward's laugh, and her mother's blasphemous prayer, and fainted away. He, hearing the fall, ran upstairs, and taking her in his arms, carried her off to Ellen's home; and after some fruitless attempts on her part toward a reconciliation with her mother, she was married to him.—And here the third part of the Tale begins.

I was not led to choose this story from any partiality to tragic, much less to monstrous events (though at the time that I composed the verses, somewhat more than twelve years ago, I was less averse to such subjects than at present), but from finding in it a striking proof of the possible effect on the imagination from an Idea violently and suddenly impressed on it. I had been reading Bryan Edwards's account of the effect of the Oby witchcraft on the Negroes in the West

Indies, and Hearne's deeply interesting anecdotes of similar workings on the imagination of the Copper Indians (those of my readers who have it in their power will be well repaid for the trouble of referring to those works for the passages alluded to); and I conceived the design of showing that instances of this kind are not peculiar to savage or barbarous tribes, and of illustrating the mode in which the mind is affected in these cases, and the progress and symptoms of the morbid action on the fancy from the beginning.

The Tale is supposed to be narrated by an old Sexton, in a country church-yard, to a traveller whose curiosity had been awakened by the appearance of three graves, close by each other, to two only of which there were gravestones. On the first of these was the name, and dates, as usual: on the second, no name, but only a date, and the words, 'The Mercy of God is infinite.' [Sept. 21, 1809.]

THE grapes upon the Vicar's wall
Were ripe as ripe could be;
And yellow leaves in sun and wind
Were falling from the tree.

On the hedge-elms in the narrow lane
Still swung the spikes of corn:
Dear Lord! it seems but yesterday—
Young Edward's marriage-morn.

Up through the wood behind the church,
There leads from Edward's door
A mossy track, all overboughed,
For half a mile or more.

And from their house-door by that track
The bride and bridegroom went;
Sweet Mary, though she was not gay,
Seemed cheerful and content.

But when they to the church-yard came,
I've heard poor Mary say,
As soon as she stepped into the sun,
Her heart it died away.

And when the Vicar joined their hands,
Her lips did creep and freeze;
But when they prayed, she thought she saw
Her mother on her knees.

And o'er the church-path they returned—
I saw poor Mary's back,
Just as she stepped beneath the boughs
Into the mossy track.

Her feet upon the mossy track
The married maiden set:
That moment—I have heard her say—
She wished she could forget.

The shade o'erflushed her limbs with heat—
Then came a chill like death:
And when the merry bells rang out,
They seemed to stop her breath.

Beneath the foulest mother's curse
No child could ever thrive:
A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive.

So five months passed: the mother still
Would never heal the strife;
But Edward was a loving man,
And Mary a fond wife.

'My sister may not visit us,
My mother says her nay:
O Edward! you are all to me,
I wish for your sake I could be
More lifesome and more gay.

'I'm dull and sad! indeed, indeed
I know I have no reason!
Perhaps I am not well in health,
And 'tis a gloomy season.'

'Twas a drizzly time—no ice, no snow!
And on the few fine days
She stirred not out, lest she might meet
Her mother in the ways.

But Ellen, spite of miry ways
And weather dark and dreary,
Trudged every day to Edward's house,
And made them all more cheery.

Oh! Ellen was a faithful friend,
More dear than any sister!
As cheerful too as singing lark;
And she ne'er left them till 'twas dark,
And then they always missed her.

And now Ash-Wednesday came—that day
But few to church repair:
For on that day you know we read
The Commination prayer.

Our late old Vicar, a kind man,
Once, Sir, he said to me,
He wished that service was clean out
Of our good liturgy.

The mother walked into the church—
To Ellen's seat she went:
Though Ellen always kept her church
All church-days during Lent.

And gentle Ellen welcomed her,
With courteous looks and mild:
Thought she, 'what if her heart should melt,
And all be reconciled!'

The day was scarcely like a day—
The clouds were black outright:
And many a night, with half a moon,
I've seen the church more light.

The wind was wild; against the glass
The rain did beat and bicker;
The church-tower swinging over head,
You scarce could hear the Vicar!

And then and there the mother knelt,
And audibly she cried—
'Oh! may a clinging curse consume
This woman by my side!

'O hear me, hear me, Lord in Heaven,
Although you take my life—
O curse this woman, at whose house
Young Edward woo'd his wife.

'By night and day, in bed and bower,
O let her cursed be!'
So having prayed, steady and slow,
She rose up from her knee,
And left the church, nor e'er again
The church-door entered she.

I saw poor Ellen kneeling still,
So pale, I guessed not why:
When she stood up, there plainly was
A trouble in her eye.

And when the prayers were done, we all
Came round and asked her why;
Giddy she seemed, and sure there was
A trouble in her eye.

But ere she from the church-door stepped
She smiled and told us why:
'It was a wicked woman's curse,'
Quoth she, 'and what care I?'

She smiled, and smiled, and passed it off
Ere from the door she stept—
But all agree it would have been
Much better had she wept.

And if her heart was not at ease,
This was her constant cry—
'It was a wicked woman's curse—
God's good, and what care I?'

There was a hurry in her looks,
Her struggles she redoubled:
'It was a wicked woman's curse,
And why should I be troubled?'

These tears will come—I dandled her
When 'twas the merest fairy—
Good creature! and she hid it all:
She told it not to Mary.

But Mary heard the tale: her arms
Round Ellen's neck she threw;
'O Ellen, Ellen, she cursed me,
And now she hath cursed you!'

I saw young Edward by himself
Stalk fast adown the lee,
He snatched a stick from every fence,
A twig from every tree.

He snapped them still with hand or knee,
And then away they flew!
As if with his uneasy limbs
He knew not what to do!

You see, good Sir! that single hill?
His farm lies underneath;
He heard it there, he heard it all,
And only gnashed his teeth.

Now Ellen was a darling love
In all his joys and cares:
And Ellen's name and Mary's name
Fast-linked they both together came,
Whene'er he said his prayers.

And in the moment of his prayers
He loved them both alike:
Yea, both sweet names with one sweet joy
Upon his heart did strike!

He reached his home, and by his looks
They saw his inward strife:
And they clung round him with their arms,
Both Ellen and his wife.

And Mary could not check her tears,
So on his breast she bowed;
Then frenzy melted into grief,
And Edward wept aloud.

Dear Ellen did not weep at all,
But closelier did she cling,
And turned her face and looked as if
She saw some frightful thing.

PART IV.

To see a man tread over graves
I hold it no good mark;
'Tis wicked in the sun and moon,
And bad luck in the dark!

You see that grave? The Lord he gives,
The Lord he takes away:
O Sir! the child of my old age
Lies there as cold as clay.

Except that grave, you scarce see one
That was not dug by me!
I'd rather dance upon 'em all
Than tread upon these three!

'Ay, Sexton! 'tis a touching tale.'
You, Sir! are but a lad;
This month I'm in my seventieth year,
And still it makes me sad.

And Mary's sister told it me,
For three good hours and more;
Though I had heard it, in the main,
From Edward's self before.

Well! it passed off! the gentle Ellen
Did well nigh dote on Mary;
And she went oftener than before,
And Mary loved her more and more:
She managed all the dairy.

To market she on market-days,
To church on Sundays came;
All seemed the same: all seemed so, Sir!
But all was not the same!

Had Ellen lost her mirth? Oh! no!
But she was seldom cheerful;
And Edward looked as if he thought
That Ellen's mirth was fearful.

When by herself, she to herself
Must sing some merry rhyme;
She could not now be glad for hours,
Yet silent all the time.

And when she soothed her friend, through all
Her soothing words 'twas plain
She had a sore grief of her own,
A haunting in her brain.

And oft she said, I 'm not grown thin!
And then her wrist she spanned;
And once when Mary was down-cast,
She took her by the hand,
And gazed upon her, and at first
She gently pressed her hand;

Then harder, till her grasp at length
Did gripe like a convulsion!
Alas! said she, we ne'er can be
Made happy by compulsion!

And once her both arms suddenly
Round Mary's neck she flung,
And her heart panted, and she felt
The words upon her tongue.

She felt them coming, but no power
Had she the words to smother;
And with a kind of shriek she cried,
'Oh Christ! you're like your mother!'

So gentle Ellen now no more
Could make this sad house cheery;
And Mary's melancholy ways
Drove Edward wild and weary.

Lingering he raised his latch at eve,
Though tired in heart and limb:
He loved no other place, and yet
Home was no home to him.

One evening he took up a book,
And nothing in it read;
Then flung it down, and groaning cried,
'Oh! Heaven! that I were dead.'

Mary looked up into his face,
And nothing to him said;
She tried to smile, and on his arm
Mournfully leaned her head.

And he burst into tears, and fell
Upon his knees in prayer:
'Her heart is broke! O God! my grief,
It is too great to bear!'

'Twas such a foggy time as makes
Old sextons, Sir! like me,
Rest on their spades to cough; the spring
Was late uncommonly.

And then the hot days, all at once,
They came, we knew not how:
You looked about for shade, when scarce
A leaf was on a bough.

It happened then ('twas in the bower
A furlong up the wood:
Perhaps you know the place, and yet
I scarce know how you should,—)

No path leads thither, 'tis not nigh
To any pasture-plot;
But clustered near the chattering brook,
Lone hollies marked the spot.

Those hollies of themselves a shape
As of an arbour took,
A close, round arbour; and it stands
Not three strides from a brook.

Within this arbour, which was still
With scarlet berries hung,
Were these three friends, one Sunday morn
Just as the first bell rung.

'Tis sweet to hear a brook, 'tis sweet
To hear the Sabbath-bell,
'Tis sweet to hear them both at once,
Deep in a woody dell.

His limbs along the moss, his head
Upon a mossy heap,
With shut-up senses, Edward lay:
That brook e'en on a working day
Might chatter one to sleep.

And he had passed a restless night,
And was not well in health;
The women sat down by his side,
And talked as 'twere by stealth.

'The sun peeps through the close thick leaves,
See, dearest Ellen! see!
'Tis in the leaves, a little sun,
No bigger than your ee;

'A tiny sun, and it has got
A perfect glory too;
Ten thousand threads and hairs of light,
Make up a glory, gay and bright,
Round that small orb, so blue.'

And then they argued of those rays,
What colour they might be;
Says this, 'they're mostly green'; says that,
'They're amber-like to me.'

So they sat chatting, while bad thoughts
Were troubling Edward's rest;
But soon they heard his hard quick pants,
And the thumping in his breast.

'A mother too!' these self-same words
Did Edward mutter plain;
His face was drawn back on itself,
With horror and huge pain.

Both groaned at once, for both knew well
What thoughts were in his mind;
When he waked up, and stared like one
That hath been just struck blind.

He sat upright; and ere the dream
Had had time to depart,
'O God, forgive me! (he exclaimed)
I have torn out her heart.'

Then Ellen shrieked, and forthwith burst
Into ungentle laughter;
And Mary shivered, where she sat,
And never she smiled after.

Carmen reliquum in futurum tempus relegatum. To-morrow! and To-morrow! and To-morrow!——

THE WANDERINGS OF CAIN.

PREFATORY NOTE.

A prose composition, one not in metre at least, seems *primâ facie* to require explanation or apology. It was written in the year 1798, near Nether Stowey in Somersetshire, at which place (*sanctum et amabile nomen!* rich by so many associations and recollections) the Author had taken up his residence in order to enjoy the society and close neighbourhood of a dear and honoured friend, T. Poole, Esq. The work was to have been written in concert with another, whose name is too venerable within the precincts of genius to be unnecessarily brought into connection with such a trifle, and who was then residing at a small distance from Nether Stowey. The title and subject were suggested by myself, who likewise drew out the scheme and the contents for each of the three books or cantos, of which the work was to consist, and which, the reader is to be informed, was to have been finished in one night! My partner undertook the first canto; I the second: and whichever had *done first*, was to set about the third. Almost thirty years have passed by; yet at this moment I cannot without something more than a smile moot the question which of the two things was the more impracticable, for a mind so eminently original to compose another man's thoughts and fancies, or for a taste so austerely pure and simple to imitate the Death of Abel? Methinks I see his grand and noble countenance as at the moment when having dispatched my own portion of the task at full finger-speed, I hastened to him with my manuscript—that look of humorous despondency fixed on his almost blank sheet of paper, and then its silent mock-piteous admission of failure struggling with the sense of the exceeding ridiculousness of the whole scheme—which broke up in a laugh: and the Ancient Mariner was written instead.

Years afterwards, however, the draft of the Plan and proposed Incidents, and the portion executed, obtained favour in the eyes of more than one person, whose judgment on a poetic work could not but have weighed with me, even though no parental partiality had been thrown into the same scale, as a make-weight: and I determined on commencing anew, and composing the whole in stanzas, and made some progress in realising this intention, when adverse gales drove my bark off the 'Fortunate Isles' of the Muses; and then other and more momentous interests prompted a different voyage, to firmer anchorage and a securer port. I have in vain tried to recover the lines from the Palimpsest tablet of my memory: and I can only offer the introductory stanza, which had been committed to writing for the purpose of procuring a friend's judgment on the metre, as a specimen.

Encinctured with a twine of leaves,
That leafy twine his only dress!
A lovely Boy was plucking fruits,
By moonlight, in a wilderness.
The moon was bright, the air was free,
And fruits and flowers together grew
On many a shrub and many a tree:
And all put on a gentle hue,
Hanging in the shadowy air
Like a picture rich and rare.
It was a climate where, they say,
The night is more beloved than day.
But who that beauteous Boy beguiled,
That beauteous Boy to linger here?
Alone, by night, a little child,
In place so silent and so wild—
Has he no friend, no loving Mother near?

I have here given the birth, parentage, and premature decease of the 'Wanderings of Cain, a poem,'—intreating, however, my readers not to think so meanly of my judgment as to suppose that I either regard or offer it as any excuse for the publication of the following fragment, (and I may add, of one or two others in its neighbourhood), in its primitive crudity. But I should find still greater difficulty in forgiving

myself, were I to record pro *tædio* publico a set of petty mishaps and annoyances which I myself wish to forget. I must be content, therefore, with assuring the friendly Reader, that the less he attributes its appearance to the Author's will, choice, or judgment, the nearer to the truth he will be.

S. T. COLERIDGE.

[1828.]

CANTO II.

'A LITTLE further, O my father, yet a little further, and we shall come into the open moonlight.' Their road was through a forest of fir-trees; at its entrance the trees stood at distances from each other, and the path was broad, and the moonlight and the moonlight shadows reposed upon it, and appeared quietly to inhabit that solitude. But soon the path winded and became narrow; the sun at high noon sometimes speckled, but never illumined it, and now it was dark as a cavern.

'It is dark, O my father!' said Enos, 'but the path under our feet is smooth and soft, and we shall soon come out into the open moonlight.'

'Lead on, my child!' said Cain: 'guide me, little child!' And the innocent little child clasped a finger of the hand which had murdered the righteous Abel, and he guided his father. 'The fir branches drip upon thee, my son.' 'Yea, pleasantly, father, for I ran fast and eagerly to bring thee the pitcher and the cake, and my body is not yet cool. How happy the squirrels are that feed on these fir-trees! they leap from bough to bough, and the old squirrels play round their young ones in the nest. I clomb a tree yesterday at noon, O my father, that I might play with them, but they leapt away from the

branches, even to the slender twigs did they leap, and in a moment I beheld them on another tree. Why, O my father, would they not play with me? I would be good to them as thou art good to me: and I groaned to them even as thou groanest when thou givest me to eat, and when thou coverest me at evening, and as often as I stand at thy knee and thine eyes look at me!' Then Cain stopped, and stifling his groans he sank to the earth, and the child Enos stood in the darkness beside him.

And Cain lifted up his voice and cried bitterly; and said, 'The Mighty One that persecuteth me is on this side and on that; he pursueth my soul like the wind, like the sand-blast he passeth through me; he is around me even as the air! O that I might be utterly no more! I desire to die—yea, the things that never had life, neither move they upon the earth—behold! they seem precious to mine eyes. O that a man might live without the breath of his nostrils! So I might abide in darkness, and blackness, and an empty space! Yea, I would lie down, I would not rise, neither would I stir my limbs till I became as the rock in the den of the lion, on which the young lion resteth his head whilst he sleepeth. For the torrent that roareth far off hath a voice; and the clouds in heaven look terribly on me: the Mighty One who is against me speaketh in the wind of the cedar grove: and in silence am I dried up.' Then Enos spake to his father, 'Arise, my father, arise, we are but a little way from the place where I found the cake and the pitcher.' And Cain said, 'How knowest thou?' and the child answered—'Behold, the bare rocks are a few of thy strides distant from the forest; and while even now thou wert lifting up thy voice, I heard the

echo.' Then the child took hold of his father, as if he would raise him: and Cain being faint and feeble rose slowly on his knees and pressed himself against the trunk of a fir, and stood upright and followed the child.

The path was dark till within three strides' length of its termination, when it turned suddenly; the thick black trees formed a low arch, and the moonlight appeared for a moment like a dazzling portal. Enos ran before and stood in the open air; and when Cain, his father, emerged from the darkness, the child was affrighted. For the mighty limbs of Cain were wasted as by fire; his hair was as the matted curls on the Bison's forehead, and so glared his fierce and sullen eye beneath; and the black abundant locks on either side, a rank and tangled mass, were stained and scorched, as though the grasp of a burning iron hand had striven to rend them; and his countenance told in a strange and terrible language of agonies that had been, and were, and were still to continue to be.

The scene around was desolate; as far as the eye could reach it was desolate: the bare rocks faced each other, and left a long and wide interval of thin white sand. You might wander on and look round and round, and peep into the crevices of the rocks and discover nothing that acknowledged the influence of the seasons. There was no spring, no summer, no autumn: and the winter's snow, that would have been lovely, fell not on these hot rocks and scorching sands. Never morning lark had poised itself over this desert; but the huge serpent often hissed there beneath the talons of the vulture, and the vulture screamed, his wings imprisoned within the coils of the serpent. The pointed and shattered summits of the

ridges of the rocks made a rude mimicry of human concerns, and seemed to prophesy mutely of things that then were not; steeples, and battlements, and ships with naked masts. 'As far from the wood as a boy might sling a pebble of the brook, there was one rock by itself at a small distance from the main ridge. It had been precipitated there perhaps by the groan which the Earth uttered when our first father fell. Before you approached, it appeared to lie flat on the ground, but its base slanted from its point, and between its point and the sands a tall man might stand upright. It was here that Enos had found the pitcher and cake, and to this place he led his father. But ere they had reached the rock they beheld a human shape: his back was towards them, and they were advancing unperceived, when they heard him smite his breast and cry aloud, 'Woe, is me! woe, is me! I must never die again, and yet I am perishing with thirst and hunger.

Pallid, as the reflection of the sheeted lightning on the heavy-sailing night-cloud, became the face of Cain; but the child Enos took hold of the shaggy skin, his father's robe, and raised his eyes to his father, and listening whispered, 'Ere yet I could speak, I am sure, O my father, that I heard that voice. Have not I often said that I remembered a sweet voice. O my father! this is it': and Cain trembled exceedingly. The voice was sweet indeed, but it was thin and querulous, like that of a feeble slave in misery, who despairs altogether, yet cannot refrain himself from weeping and lamentation. And, behold! Enos glided forward, and creeping softly round the base of the rock, stood before the stranger, and looked up into his face. And the Shape shrieked, and turned round,

and Cain beheld him, that his limbs and his face were those of his brother ABEL whom he had killed! And Cain stood like one who struggles in his sleep because of the exceeding terribleness of a dream.

Thus as he stood in silence and darkness of Soul, the SHAPE fell at his feet, and embraced his knees, and cried out with a bitter outcry, 'Thou eldest born of Adam, whom Eve, my mother, brought forth, cease to torment me! I was feeding my flocks in green pastures by the side of quiet rivers, and thou killedst me; and now I am in misery.' Then Cain closed his eyes, and hid them with his hands; and again he opened his eyes, and looked around him, and said to Enos, 'What beholdest thou? Didst thou hear a voice, my son?' 'Yes, my father, I beheld a man in unclean garments, and he uttered a sweet voice full of lamentation.' Then Cain raised up the Shape that was like Abel, and said, 'The Creator of our father, who had respect unto thee, and unto thy offering, wherefore hath he forsaken thee?' Then the Shape shrieked a second time, and rent his garment, and his naked skin was like the white sands beneath their feet; and he shrieked yet a third time, and threw himself on his face upon the sand that was black with the shadow of the rock, and Cain and Enos sate beside him; the child by his right hand, and Cain by his left. They were all three under the rock, and within the shadow. The Shape that was like Abel raised himself up, and spake to the child; 'I know where the cold waters are but I may not drink, wherefore didst thou then take away my pitcher?' But Cain said, 'Didst thou not find favour in the sight of the Lord thy God?' The Shape answered, 'The Lord is God of the living only,

the dead have another God.' Then the child Enos lifted up his eyes and prayed; but Cain rejoiced secretly in his heart. 'Wretched shall they be all the days of their mortal life,' exclaimed the Shape, 'who sacrifice worthy and acceptable sacrifices to the God of the dead; but after death their toil ceaseth. Woe is me, for I was well beloved by the God of the living, and cruel wert thou, O my brother, who didst snatch me away from his power and his dominion.' Having uttered these words, he rose suddenly, and fled over the sands; and Cain said in his heart, 'The curse of the Lord is on me; but who is the God of the dead?' and he ran after the Shape, and the Shape fled shrieking over the sands, and the sands rose like white mists behind the steps of Cain, but the feet of him that was like Abel disturbed not the sands. He greatly outrun Cain, and turning short, he wheeled round, and came again to the rock where they had been sitting, and where Enos still stood; and the child caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and he fell upon the ground. And Cain stopped, and beholding him not, said, 'he has passed into the dark woods,' and he walked slowly back to the rock; and when he reached it the child told him that he had caught hold of his garment as he passed by, and that the man had fallen upon the ground; and Cain once more sat beside him, and said, 'Abel, my brother, I would lament for thee, but that the spirit within me is withered, and burned up with extreme agony. Now, I pray thee, by thy flocks, and by thy pastures, and by the quiet rivers which thou lovedst, that thou tell me all that thou knowest. Who is the God of the dead? where doth he make his dwelling? what sacrifices are acceptable unto him? for I have offered

but have not been received; I have prayed, and have not been heard; and how can I be afflicted more than I already am?' The Shape arose and answered, 'O that thou hadst had pity on me as I will have pity on thee. Follow me, Son of Adam! and bring thy child with thee!'

And they three passed over the white sands between the rocks, silent as the shadows.

LEWTI;

OR,

THE CIRCASSIAN LOVE-CHANT.

AT midnight, by the stream I rov'd
To forget the form I lov'd.
Image of LEWTI! from my mind
Depart; for LEWTI is not kind.

The Moon was high, the moonlight gleam,
And the shadow of a star
Heav'd upon Tamaha's stream;
But the rock shone brighter far,
The rock half shelter'd from my view,
By pendent boughs of tressy yew.—
So shines my LEWTI's forehead fair,
Gleaming thro' her sable hair.
Image of LEWTI! from my mind
Depart; for LEWTI is not kind.

I saw a cloud of palest hue,
Onward to the moon it pass'd.
Still brighter and more bright it grew
With floating colours not a few,
Till it reach'd the moon at last.

Then the cloud was wholly bright,
With a rich and amber light;
And so with many a hope I seek,
And with such joy I find my LEWTI;
And even so my pale wan cheek
Drinks in as deep a flush of beauty!
Nay, treach'rous image! leave my mind,
If LEWTI never will be kind.

The little cloud—it floats away,
Away it goes—away so soon!
Alas! it has no pow'r to stay:
Its hues are dim, its hues are grey—
Away it passes from the moon.
How mournfully it seems to fly,
Ever fading more and more,
To joyless regions of the sky—
And now 'tis whiter than before,
As white as my poor cheek will be,
When, LEWTI! on my couch I lie,
A dying man, for love of thee.
Nay, treach'rous image! leave my mind—
And yet thou didst not look unkind!

I saw a vapour in the sky,
Thin and white and very high.
I ne'er beheld so thin a cloud—
Perhaps the breezes that can fly
Now below, and now above,
Have snatch'd aloft the lawny shroud
Of lady fair, that died for love:
For Maids, as well as Youths, have perish'd
From fruitless love, too fondly cherish'd!
Nay, treach'rous image! leave my mind—
For LEWTI never will be kind.

Hush ! my heedless feet from under
Slip the crumbling banks for ever;
Like echoes to a distant thunder,
They plunge into the gentle river :
The river-swans have heard my tread,
And startle from their reedy bed.
O beauteous birds ! methinks ye measure
Your movements to some heav'nly tune !
O beauteous birds ! 'tis such a pleasure
To see you move beneath the moon ;
I would, it were your true delight
To sleep by day and wake all night.

I know the place where LEWTI lies,
When silent night has clos'd her eyes—
It is a breezy jasmin bow'r,
The Nightingale sings o'er her head :
Had I the enviable pow'r
To creep unseen with noiseless tread,
Then should I view her bosom white,
Heaving lovely to the sight,
As these two swans together heave
On the gently swelling wave.

O that she saw me in a dream,
And dreamt that I had died for care!
All pale and wasted I would seem,
Yet fair withal, as spirits are.
I 'd die indeed, if I might see
Her bosom heave and heave for me!
Soothe, gentle image ! soothe my mind!
To-morrow LEWTI may be kind.

NOTES

EDITOR'S NOTES.

THE ANCYENT MARINERE (page 1). Written Nov. 1797-March 1798.

Title.—In 1800 Half-title and Heading run: *The Ancient Mariner. A Poet's Reverie.* Doubtless the poem *is* a day-dream—a weird fantasy, built of the beauty, grandeur, and terror of a thousand dreams; but to *style* it a *Poet's Reverie* could only serve, as Lamb pointed out to Wordsworth (Letter of Jan. 1800), to subvert the reader's faith. Coleridge felt the force of this criticism, and ran his pen through the words in the Heading, but overlooked them in the Half-title, where they re-appeared in 1802 and 1805.

Argument.—In 1800 the dramatic *motif* of the ballad is explicitly stated: ' . . . South Pole: how the Ancient Mariner cruelly, and in contempt of the laws of hospitality, killed a Sea-bird: and how he was followed by many and strange judgements; and in what manner,' etc. The *Argument* disappeared in 1802 and 1805.

Motto and Marginal Gloss.—The marginal gloss and the motto from Burnet, both invariably reprinted with the poem nowadays, first appeared in Ed. 1817 (*Sibylline Leaves*). The motto follows, with a free translation:

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabula, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed

veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus. (Archeol. Philos. p. 68).

Translation:—'I can readily believe that in the Universe there are more Natures invisible than Natures visible. But who shall describe to us this vast Family of unseen Beings, their various Ranks, Affinities, Differences, and the several Functions of each? What Business employs them? In what Regions do they dwell? The Mind of Man hath ever aspired after a sure Knowledge of these Things, but hath never attained thereunto. Meanwhile I deny not but that it is good and pleasant for us to gaze upon that Image or Eidolon of a greater and better World which the Fancy paints upon the Canvas of the Soul, and thus to save our Minds—trained and broker as they are to the petty Affairs of Everyday—from narrowing their Range overmuch and sinking quite into a Course of stunted and puny Thought. But withal it behoves us to keep our Eyes ever fixed upon Truth, and carefully school ourselves to distinguish Certainty from Uncertainty, Light from Darkness.'

The gloss which follows is reprinted as an invaluable key to the poem.

ll. 1-16. An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one. 17-28. The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale. 29-36. The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the Line. 37-44. The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale. 45-52. The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole. 53-60. The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen. 61-68. Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality. 69-76. And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice. 77-80. The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen. 81-92. His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck. 93-98. But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime. 99-102. The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line. 103-114. The ship hath been suddenly becalmed. 115-126. And

the Albatross begins to be avenged. 127-130. A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more. 131-138. The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck. 139-148. The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off. 149-155. At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst. 156-162. A flash of joy; And horror follows. For can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide? 163-176. It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship. 177-8. And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun. 179-190. The Spectre-Woman and her Death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship. Like vessel, like crew! 191-194. Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner. 195-203. At the rising of the Moon (No twilight within the courts of the Sun), 204-207. One after another, 208-211. His shipmates drop down dead. 212-215. But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner. 216-221. The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him; 222-227. But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance. 228-231. He despiseth the creatures of the calm. 232-235. And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead. 236-254. But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men. 255-263. In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and every where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival. 264-273. By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm. 274-276. Their beauty and their happiness. 277-279. He blesseth them in his heart. 280-283. The Spell begins to break. 284-300. By grace of the holy Mother the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain. 301-318. He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element. 319-338. The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on; 339-381. But not by the souls of the men, nor by dæmons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint. 382-397. The lonesome Spirit from the south pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance. 398-414. The Polar Spirit's fellow-dæmons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take

part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward. 415-434. The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure. 435-446. The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes and his penance begins anew. 447-468. The curse is finally expiated. 469-506. And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country. 507-526. The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies, and appear in their own forms of light. 527-574. The Hermit of the Wood approacheth the ship with wonder. 575-582. The ship suddenly sinketh. 583-606. The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat. 607-614. The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him. 615-642. And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land, 643-658. And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

TEXT.—ll. 9-16. In 1817 Stanza iii. (ll. 9-13) was omitted, and Stanza iv. became:

> He holds him with his skinny hand,
> 'There was a ship,' quoth he.
> 'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
> Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

For *eftsoons* see l. 527, *note*. With l. 16 cf. *King Lear*, v. iii. 276:

> I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion
> I would have made them skip.

ll. 19, 20. These lines, with ll. 218, 219, were contributed by Wordsworth.

l. 36. A *fagotto* presented by Coleridge's friend Tom Poole to Stowey Church choir furnished the hint of 'the loud bassoon' in this line. Cf. ll. 176, 358, 454, *notes*.

ll. 45-48. This stanza reappears in edd. 1800-1805 in a less abrupt and exclamatory shape. In 1817 it is replaced by the following stanzas:—

> And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
> Was tyrannous and strong:
> He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
> And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dripping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roar'd the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

[l. 49.] And now there came both mist and snow, *etc.*

ll. 51, 59. 'Ice mast-high'—'It crack'd and growl'd,' etc. Probably suggested by certain passages of Captain Thos. James's *Strange and Dangerous Voyage . . . in his intended Discovery of the North-West Passage*: London, 1633—*e.g.*: 'We had Ice not farre off about us, and some pieces as high as our Topmast-head' (p. 7); 'It [the Ice] made a hollow and hideous noyse, like an over-fall of water' (p. 8); '[The Ice] began to breake with a most terrible thundering noyse' (p. 12). Cf. l. 202, *note*. Captain James's pathetic *Epitaph on Companions left behind in the Northern Seas* was included by Wordsworth in the album of poems and extracts presented by him to Lady Mary Lowther in Dec. 1819.

l. 60. 'A wild and ceaseless sound': edd. 1800-1805; original line restored, 1817. 'The author [of the *Ancyent Marinere*], who is confidently said to be Mr. Coleridge, is not exactly versed in the old language he employs. "Noises of a swound," "broad as a weft" (l. 83), are both nonsensical. . . . The simile, "like God's own head" (l. 93) makes the reader shudder, no with poetic feeling, but with religious disapprobation.' (From a review, probably by Francis Wrangham, of *Lyrical Ballads*: *British Critic*, Oct. 1799.) With characteristic complaisance Coleridge removed all three phrases from the text of 1800-1805; restoring, however, the first and the third in 1817. But there is nothing amiss with 'noises of [' in,' 1817] a swound,' or 'broad as a weft.' *Swound* the reviewer ought to have known as an obsolete form of *swoon*, for it occurs in many Elizabethan and later writers—Drayton, Lyly, Beaumont and Fletcher, Middleton, Bishop Hall, etc. Coleridge took it—along with *I wist* (*I-wis*, l. 144), *pheere* (*feere*, l. 180), *sterte* (l. 195), *eldritch* (*eldridge*, l. 234) and *beforne* (*biforne*, l. 373)—from Percy's 'restored' ballad of *Sir Cauline*, which also served him as a metrical model for the *Ancyent Marinere*.

In *Sir Cauline*, *swound* rhymes with *ground*, and in Drayton's *Barons' Wars*, ii. 40, with *drowned*, so that Coleridge is right in coupling it here with *around*. The final 'd' is a natural outgrowth due to accentual stress, as in *bound*, rightly *boun*, 'ready to go,' and *round*, rightly *roun*, 'to whisper.' Cf. the vulgar *gownd* and *drownded*.

l. 65. In 1817: 'It ate the food it ne'er had eat.'

l. 83. A sailor's image. The word *weft* here has nothing to do with *weave* (A.-S. *wefan*); it is a derivative of *waff*, *wave* (M. E. *wauen*, A.-S. *wafian*), 'to move or swing to and fro,' and it probably owes its vowel *e* to an early confusion, from similarity of meaning, with *waif*: M. E. *waif*, *weif*, a word derived through French from Icelandic. [As early as *c.* 1500, we find *waive* (*waiff*) and *wave* (*waff*) thus confused. Gavin Douglas (1474-1522), *Virg.*, 104, 53, has 'His *waiffand* haris,' while—*Virg.* 23, 2—he has 'with wind *waffing* hir haris lowsit of tracc.' So too *Gawan and Gol.*, ii. 10: 'I war wourthy to be | Hingit heigh on ane tre | That ilk creature might se | To *waif* [swing] with the wynd.'] *Waif* is the Icelandic *veif*, 'anything moving or flapping about' (hence 'anything tossing on the waves,' 'a derelict,' 'a stray'); and as far back as 1530 (*Burgh Records*, *Aberdeen*) it is found in the sense of 'a signal-flag,' which is precisely the meaning of *weft* here. (See Supplement to Jamieson's *Scot. Dict.*, *s.v. waiff*.) A *weft*, *waft* or *wheft* (see Admiral Smyth's *Sailor's Word Book*), is a flag, gathered in and tied across with a cord near the head (or part next the staff), the rest of the bunting being allowed to fly free. Such a flag, hoisted at the masthead (in the R.N.), recalls boats. (Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, v. 11: 'In such a night | Stood Dido with a willow in her hand | Upon the wild sea banks, and *waft* her love | To come again to Carthage.') Scott (*The Abbot*, chap. xxix.) uses *weft* in the sense of 'a flag-signal to return': 'There have already been made two *wefts* from the warder's turret to intimate that those in the castle are impatient for your return.' Coleridge compares the sunset streaming from the central orb upon the waters, like a resplendent cloth of gold, to the bunting spreading out upon the breeze from the tied centre. In deference to the strictures of the *British Critic*, Oct. 1799 (see l. 69, *note*), he altered this line in 1800 to 'Still hid in mist; and on the left'—a reading never

afterwards changed. It should be added that Spenser (*F. Q.*, III. x. 36; v. iii. 27) and Ben Jonson (*Every Man out of his Humour*) use 'weft' in the sense of *waif* or 'stray'; and it is of course from Spenser that Shelley (*To the Queen of my Heart*, l. 12) and Browning (*Sordello*, Bk. II.; *Two in the Campagna*) have borrowed the word:—

> Thy beauty . . . shall seem like a *weft* from the sky.
>
> The same pure, fleecy hair; one *weft* of which,
> Golden and great, quite touch'd his cheek
> As o'er he leant.
>
> Yonder weed
> Took up the floating *weft* [a gossamer-thread].

See additional Notes, *infra*.

l. 93. In edd. 1800-1805, 'Nor dim nor red, like an Angel's head' (l. 60, *note*); 'like God's own head' was restored in 1817.

l. 94. *Uprist*, one of the words borrowed from Chaucer. Cf. *withouten* (l. 161), *yspread* (*yspred*, l. 260), *yeven* (l. 286), *lavrock* (*laverokke*, l. 348), *jargoning* (l. 352), *n'old* (*n'olde*, l. 375), *eftsones* (l. 527), *aventure* (l. 618), and *blosmy* (*The Nightingale*, l. 84). These loan-words are interesting if only as showing what parts of Chaucer had been studied by Coleridge before 1798. *The Legend of Dido* (*Legend of Good Women*) furnished *uprist*, *withouten*; also *sterte*, *pheere* or *fere* [but cf. l. 60, *note*], and *unnethe* in *Phantom or Fact*; *The Legend of Philomela*, *eftsones*; *The Romaunt of the Rose*, *lavrock* and *jargoning*; *The Knighte's Tale*, *yeven* and *n'old*; *The Reve's Tale*, *yspread* (also *uprist*). Is it fanciful to regard the description of the Spectre-Woman *Life-in-Death* as modelled on that of *Ydelnesse* in the *Romaunt*, ll. 539-644 —the section immediately preceding *The Garden* (ll. 645-728), where Coleridge found *lavrock*, *jargoning* and the *angel's song* (see ll. 671-2)?

> Hir heer was as yelowe of hewe
> As any basin scoured newe . . .
> Hir face whyt and wel coloured . . .
> Hir throte, al-so whyt of hewe
> As snow on braunche snowed newe.

Here *uprist* = 'rises up,' as in *Legend of Dido*, l. 265:

The dawening up-rist out of the sea.

Percy's *Reliques*, and a volume of Anderson's *British Poets* (probably vol. i., containing Chaucer, Surrey, Wyatt and Sackville) were amongst the books left with Lamb by Coleridge when he quitted London for Grasmere and Keswick early in April 1800.

l. 100. In 1817: 'The furrow stream'd off free.' Original line restored, 1828. See *Satyrane's Letters*, No. I. (*Biographia Literaria*, ii. 197, ed. 1847; p. 245, ed. Bohn).

ll. 105-6. Cf. Wordsworth's *Solitary Reaper* (1803), ll. 15, 16:

Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

ll. 119-122. Cf. *The Destiny of Nations* (1796), ll. 278-281:

As what time after long and pestful calms,
With slimy shapes and miscreated life
Poisoning the vast Pacific, the fresh breeze
Wakens the merchant-sail uprising.

ll. 139, 140. In 1817 these were expanded into a six-line stanza:

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! A weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

ll. 144-5. Coleridge seems to mistake the character of the common particle *iwis*, *ywis*, 'certainly' (A.-S. *gewis*, adj. 'certain'), which, often appearing in MSS. as *I-wis*, was erroneously referred to a fictitious verb *wis*, unknown to Anglo-Saxon. Coleridge certainly believed in such a verb, for in *Alice du Clos* 'you wis' occurs. *I-wis* is found in *Sir Cauline* (l. 60, *note*).

l. 156. A reminiscence of the Welsh tour in 1794, when 'Brookes, Berdmore, and myself, at the imminent hazard of our lives, scaled the very summit of Penmaenmaur. It was a most dreadful expedition' (S. T. C. to Masters of Jesus, *Biog. Lit.*, ed. 1847, ii. 343). 'We were nearly dead with thirst, and could not speak from the constriction till we found a little puddle under a stone. Berdmore said to me: "You grinned like an idiot!" He had done the same' (*Table Talk*, May 31, 1830).

l. 161. 'His *fere* and he, *withouten* any gyde,' *Legend of Dido*, l. 46 (953, *note*).

l. 176. 'Like restless gossameres.' One of the few images in this poem borrowed from the Nether Stowey surroundings: cf. l. 36, *note*. 'The surface of the [Quantock] heath restless and glittering with the waving of the spiders' threads . . . miles of grass, light and glittering, and the insects passing' (Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal*, February 8, 1798). The spelling *gossâmere* is Drayton's (*Nymphidia*, xvii.). Chaucer writes *gossomer*, correctly.

ll. 177-180. A unique stanza in the *A. M.*, consisting of four lines of four accents each. In 1800 *pheere* was got rid of and the metre normalized (four accents alternating with three), and in 1817 the stanza was again recast, thus:

> Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun
> Did peer, as through a grate?
> And is that Woman all her crew?
> Is that a DEATH? and are there two?
> Is DEATH that woman's mate?

ll. 181-185. Omitted in 1817, when also ll. 189, 190 became:

> The Night-Mair LIFE-IN-DEATH was she
> Who thicks man's blood with cold.

ll. 195-198. Omitted in 1828. In 1817 the next stanza was resolved into the two following:

> The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
> At one stride comes the dark;
> With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
> Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and look'd sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seem'd to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

ll. 202-204. Captain Thos. James (see ll. 51, 59, *note*) in his *Journal*, under January 26, 1632, notes: 'I observed, when the eastern edge of the moon did touch the planet *Mars*, the Lion's-Heart was then in the east quarter 21.45 above the horizon.' In 1817, l. 204 became: 'One after one, by the star-dogg'd Moon.' Sailors say that a star dogging the moon forebodes evil.

l. 226. In 1817, 'And never a saint took pity on.'

l. 230. In 1817, 'And a thousand thousand.' In l. 234, *eldritch* (see l. 60, *note*) became *ghastly* in 1800, and *rotting* in 1817.

ll. 254-5. The turning-point of the story, indicated with wonderful skill by means of a marked variation in the metre. The shuddering, convulsive cry of the *Mariners* is arrested, and a pause of silence ensues, followed by the magical lines which tell how the mild Regent of the Night, heretofore merely a spectator of the drama, now intervenes, as the Sailors' Friend, for healing and composure.

l. 260. In 1800: 'Like April hoar-frost spread.' For *ysprad*, a loan-word from Chaucer—(*Reve's Tale*, l. 220, *yspred*; *Prioresse's Tale*, l. 2, *ysprad*)—see l. 94, *note*.

l. 286. For *yeven* (Chaucer, *Knighte's Tale*, l. 228) see l. 94, *note*.

l. 309. In 1800, with closer truth to nature: 'The wan stars danc'd between.'

ll. 319, 320. In 1800:

The loud wind never reach'd the Ship,
Yet now the Ship mov'd on!

ll. 337-8. In 1800 these lines were omitted, and the following stanza inserted before ll. 339-342:

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!'
Be calm, thou wedding-guest!
'Twas not those souls, that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again
But a troop of Spirits blest:

[l. 339]. For when it dawn'd, *etc.*

ll. 348, 351. For *Lavrock*, *jargoning* (Chaucer, *Romaunt*, A. ll. 662, 716), see l. 94, *note*. Describing the Garden of Sir Mirthe, the poet says:

Ther mighte men see many flokkes
Of turtles and [of] *laverokkes*. . . .
And thrustles, terins and mavys
That songen for to winne hem prys,
And eek to sormounte in hir song
These other briddes hem among. . . .
They songe hir song as fayre and wel
As angels doon espirituel . . .
Layes of love, ful wel sowning
They songen in hir *jargoning*.

ll. 358-361. Another of the rare images in this poem derived from the Nether Stowey environment. See l. 36, *note*; l. 176, *note*; l. 454, *note*. The 'hidden brook' is the self-same chatterer of *The Three Graves*, nigh to which stood the lone arbour of 'circling hollies woodbine-clad' in which young *Edward* dreamed his fateful dream. It is the brook that runs down from the comb in which stands the village of Holford through the grounds of Alfoxden—the same of which Coleridge sings in *The Nightingale* and *The Lime-Tree Bower*, and which is described by Wordsworth in the Fenwick Note to *Lines Written in Early Spring*.

ll. 362-377. These four stanzas were struck out in 1800.

l. 373. For *beforne* see l. 60, *note*. For *n'old*, l. 375 (*n'olde*—Chaucer, *Knighte's Tale*, l. 166)—see l. 94, *note*.

ll. 419-423. J. Dykes Campbell gives the following sources of this lovely stanza:

> O woman!
> I have stood silent like a slave before thee.
> (*Osorio*, Act v. ll. 302-3);

and

> For his [the sea's] great chrystal eye is always cast
> Up to the moon, and on her fixed fast.
> (SIR JOHN DAVIES' *Orchestra*, Stanza xlix.)

ll. 481-502. These five stanzas, as well as the four already mentioned (ll. 362-377), and a later one (ll. 531-536), were struck out in 1800—a curtailment which greatly reduces the dreamlike inconsequence of the incidents.

l. 527. For *eftsones*, 'very soon' (Chaucer, *Legend of Philomela*, l. 95), see l. 94, *note*.

ll. 454-5. The fourth and last image taken from the Nether Stowey vicinage. Old stumps of oak, macerated through damp and carpeted with moss, abound in the wooded combs of Quantock. *Cf.* ll. 36, 176, 358.

ll. 568-570. The owlet in the ivy-tod is probably borrowed from the passage in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bonduca* misquoted thus by Lamb in a letter to Coleridge (June 14, 1796):

> Then did I see these valiant men of Britain
> Like boding owls creep into tods of ivy,
> And hoot their fears to one another nightly.

Tod is of Scandinavian origin and means *bush* or *turf*. Icel. *toddi*=a tod of wool; G. *zotte*, *zote*=a tuft of hair. Hence the fox is called *tod* from his *bushy* or *tufty* tail (Skeat, *Concise Etym. Dict.*).

l. 582. 'We have sometimes doubted whether the miraculous destruction of the vessel in the presence of the pilot and hermit was not an error, in respect of its bringing the purely preternatural into too close contact with the actual framework of the poem. The only link between those out-of-the-world wonders and the wedding-guest should, we rather suspect, have been the blasted, unknown being himself who described them. . . . There should have been no other witnesses of the

truth of any part of the tale but the *Mariner* himself.' (*Quarterly Review*, Vol III., No. ciii. Art. 1, p. 28.) The critic overlooks the fact that the final disappearance of the ship in the presence of hermit and pilot is itself one of the incidents of a tale to the truth of which, from first to last, the wedding-guest has no testimony save that of the *Mariner* himself. The hermit, and the pilot and his boy, are not near at hand, to corroborate, or to explode, the story: they are away in some 'far countree.' Since his shriving, the *Mariner* has passed, like night, from land to land.

ll. 616-618. In 1800:

> That agency [*misprint for* agony] returns
> And till my ghastly tale is told
> This heart within me burns.

For *aventure* (l. 618) see l. 94, *note*. Coleridge borrows the word from Chaucer, *Legend of Dido*, l. 30: 'But of his aventures in the see,' etc. (a rare sense in Chaucer: cf. Ascham, '*Adventures* now-a-days mean experiences in travel').

ll. 624-629. A triptych of contrasted vignettes evoked with six strokes of the pen—a wonderful triumph indeed of the shaping spirit of Imagination.

THE FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE (page 28). Part of Act IV. of Coleridge's tragedy, *Osorio*, written in 1797. The *Tale* illustrates the conflict between light and darkness, sage-lore and priestcraft—between nature, freedom, science and pedantry, tyranny and superstition—a favourite theme of the Unitarian probationer of 1797.

LINES LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE (page 32). Wordsworth dates this poem 1795, but adds that it was written in part at Hawkshead before he left school (Oct. 1787). This can only apply to ll. 1-7. The whole was in existence before July 1797, when Lamb, visiting Stowey, heard Wordsworth recite it and, later, wrote to beg a copy of '*that Inscription*' from Coleridge; and the close (ll. 44-60) cannot have been written earlier than 1795, for here Wordsworth sounds a counterblast to the teacher at whose feet he had sat during

the years 1793 and 1794. Here he warns the 'stranger' against the intellectual arrogance, the isolation and self-sufficingness, which are the outcome of the eighteenth-century reason-worship and, in particular, of that phase of it presented by the Godwinian philosophy. According to this system virtue was not a matter of habits or dispositions; on the contrary, the only path to virtue lay over the ruins of every habitude of thought and feeling—in short, of all, good and bad alike, that constitutes human character. Godwin had taught that the worthy man was in truth he who owned literally *no moral character at all*, but had at command an alert intelligence, emancipated by education from whatever might warp, perplex or weaken it. 'He had asserted that "virtue cannot exist in an eminent degree, unaccompanied by an extensive survey of causes and their consequences." He had sneered at Tertullian for saying "that the most ignorant peasant under the Christian dispensation possessed more real knowledge than the wisest of the ancient philosophers," and had shown the absurdity of pretending that an "honest ploughman" could be "as virtuous as Cato."'[1] And thus for a time Wordsworth, despite his natural graciousness of mind, had thought, or zealously laboured to think, regarding his humble brethren. Afterwards, when reflection had shown him the hideous consequences of the Godwinian moral anarchy, causing him to recoil therefrom in horror and dismay, he puts himself to school on the lonely roads of Dorsetshire, and there soon learned

> How oft high service is performed within
> When all the external man is rude in show,—
> Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
> But a mere mountain-chapel, that protects
> Its simple worshippers from sun and shower.

In connection with ll. 44-60, Coleridge's letters to Southey (July 1797), and to his brother George (May 1798), should be read —letters written in the first glow of his discipleship to Wordsworth. 'I am as much a Pangloss as ever,' he writes to

[1] *The Early Life of Wordsworth*, by É. Legouis. Translated by J. W. Matthews (Dent), page 307.

Southey, 'only less contemptuous than I used to be when I argue how unwise it is to feel contempt for anything.' To his brother George he declares himself a firm believer in the inherent depravity of human nature—'that from our mothers' wombs our understandings are darkened; and even where our understandings are in the light, that our organization is depraved and our volitions imperfect.'[1] Here again he is the mouthpiece of Wordsworth, who no longer laid the vices of individuals at the door of society, as in the years of his revolutionary fervour he had been prone to do, but had learned that evil was ineradicably fixed within the very seat and centre of man's moral being—nay, that with horrible subtlety it could turn reason herself into a hired advocate. Hence man is here (l. 59) bidden 'still to suspect and still revere himself'—still to suspect a heart, whose best virtues are not free from taint of something selfish and impure—still to revere it as the 'most apparent home' of Him who is the 'Soul of our souls and Safeguard of the world.'

Sternly as he here reproves pride and contempt, Wordsworth, it must be owned, was not backward in giving scorn for scorn to the 'reasoning, self-sufficing things' of his time. See *e.g. Excursion*, iv. 956, and the *Poet's Epitaph*, with the fierce invective of which Lamb had the courage to own himself displeased.

THE NIGHTINGALE, April 1798 (p. 35). On the evenings of April 18, 24, 25, and 27 Coleridge drank tea at Alfoxden and was brought on his way homewards by William and Dorothy. It was doubtless after one or other of these evening walks[2] that *The Nightingale* was written—perhaps the loveliest of all Coleridge's poems in blank verse. Certainly none of these is more eloquent of his domestic happiness, or of delighted joyance in the fair sights and sweet sounds of nature, while it also affords a striking illustration of that oneness of feeling

[1] *Letters of S. T. Coleridge*, ed. Ernest H. Coleridge (Heinemann), pp. 224, 242.

[2] Or perhaps after May 6, when—to quote Dorothy's *Journal*—it was 'very pleasant in the evening. Met Coleridge as we were walking out. Went with him to Stowey; heard the nightingale; saw a glow-worm.' See ll. 68, 69.

and sentiment which knit the three friends into a threefold cord, not quickly to be broken. The poem—one of a meditative and idyllic kind invented by Coleridge—probably originated in a conversation on the erroneous and arbitrary associations which arise in the mind through the caprice of fancy, or under the influence of false delicacy and refinement. This was a frequent topic with Wordsworth, who had himself outgrown many youthful fallacies of taste and feeling, and who held it to be the duty of a great poet, not only faithfully to *reflect* men's feelings but, to a certain degree, to *rectify* them as well—'to give mankind new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane, pure and permanent, in short, more consonant to Nature, that is, to Eternal Nature and the great moving spirit of things. . . . I may illustrate this by a reference to natural objects. What false notions have prevailed [for ages past], of the true character of the nightingale! As far as my friend's poem, in the *Lyrical Ballads*, is read, it will contribute greatly to rectify these. You will recollect a passage in Cowper where, speaking of rural sounds, he says [*The Task*, i. l. 205]:

"And *even* the boding owl
That hails the rising moon has charms for me."[1]

In the *Evening Walk* (1793) Wordsworth himself had incorporated the very line which here he censures: 'The bird . . . shall soon Salute with boding note the rising moon' (l. 392); and he had also spoken of 'the tremulous sob of the complaining owl' (l. 443). Oddly enough, these two passages survived the recensions of 1820, 1827 and 1832; but in 1836, when the poems were minutely revised for the stereotyped edition, 'boding' was altered to 'gladsome,' and l. 443 became

The sportive outcry of the mocking owl.

In *A Morning Exercise* (1828), stanzas i.-iv., Wordsworth describes the wayward action of the Fancy in linking the notion of grief to the notes of certain birds—the raven, the owl, the nightingale, the swallow —and thus

Sending sad shadows after things not sad,
Peopling the harmless fields with sign of woe;

but adds that

Ne'er could Fancy bend the buoyant Lark
To melancholy service.

Cowper was passionately fond of natural objects, yet you see he mentions it as a marvellous thing that he could connect pleasure with the cry of the owl. In the same poem he makes an amiable boast of loving that beautiful plant, the gorse, "*unsightly*" and unsmooth as it is ['the prickly gorse, shapeless, deformed and dangerous to the touch'—*The Task*, i. l. 527]. There are many aversions of this kind which, though they have some foundation in nature, have yet so slight a one that—though they may have prevailed hundreds of years—a philosopher will look upon them as accidents' (Wordsworth to John Wilson, 1802—slightly abridged).

ll. 23-39. Coleridge here illustrates the growth of the vast floating currency of hackneyed phrase, metaphor and fable, 'characterised by various degrees of wanton deviation from good sense and nature,' which in his day went by the name of poetic style and diction. The later poet-parrots of l. 23 mechanically repeat the epithet found by the primitive poet, without being animated by the passion which called it up, and from which alone it derives truth, force and propriety. *Cf.* Wordsworth's *Appendix on Poetic Diction* (*Lyrical Ballads*, ed. 1802, vol. ii., and in all collected editions of the Poems), and Coleridge's letter to W. Sotheby, July 13, 1802: 'In my opinion every phrase, every metaphor, every personification should have its justifying cause in some *passion*,

In the Ode *To Enterprise* (1820), he speaks of the nightingale as 'the sweet bird, misnamed the melancholy.' In a tender little *Song* Hartley Coleridge gives a poet's reason for the intermittent note of sadness in the nightingale's song. She trills a lay as loud and sweet and joyous as the lark's—

With feeling bliss, no less than his,
Her little heart is thrilling.

Yet ever and anon, a sigh
Peers through her lavish mirth;
For the lark's bold song is of the sky,
And hers is of the earth.
By night and day, she tunes her lay,
To drive away all sorrow,
For bliss, alas! to-night must pass,
And woe may come to-morrow.

either of the poet's mind, or of the characters described by the poet' (*Letters of S. T. Coleridge*, p. 374).

l. 39. Coleridge humorously quotes from an early poem of his own (*To the Nightingale*, 1795), printed by him only in edd. 1796 and 1803:

> But I *do* hear thee, and the high bough mark,
> Within whose mild moon-mellowed foliage hid
> Thou warblest sad thy pity-pleading strains.

ll. 49-51. According to Mr. E. H. Coleridge, the 'castle huge' is Enmore Castle (built by John, second Earl of Egmont, Lord of the Admiralty in the Rockingham Ministry, 1766) about seven miles distant from Nether Stowey. The 'most gentle maid' was Ellen, daughter of Mr. Cruikshank, agent to the third Earl. John Cruikshank, the agent's son and assistant, lived at Stowey, next door to Coleridge; and between the Coleridges and the Cruikshanks an intimate friendship existed.

l. 60. See additional Notes, *infra*.

ll. 69-74. Over this charming picture there floats something of the same atmosphere of luminous gloom; the same swimming phantom light, as of a full moon shining through a thin grey cloud; that invests and transforms the opening scene of *Christabel*—the lovely lady stealing along with low sighs through the wood, a furlong from the castle-gate, to pray beneath the oak-tree for the weal of her absent friend.

l. 84. The 'blosmy twig' is Chaucer's 'blosmy bowe' (*Troilus and Criseyde*, ii. 821; *Parlement of Foules*, 183), and Milton's 'bloomy spray.' In his edition of Milton's Sonnets (Kegan Paul, 1883) Mark Pattison writes: 'The naturalist easily feels that Milton's nightingale is the poetical nightingale, not the real bird of the English copse and brake. . . . The nightingale is as widely diffused in second-hand poetry as he is locally. Indeed more so; Dyer, *e.g. Grongar Hill*, l. 7, placing the bird in the valley of Towey in Carmarthenshire, whereas it is a well-known fact . . . that it has never been met with so far to the west. . . . There is that in the musical note of the bird, and the circumstance of its singing at night, which lays hold of the imagination. The first person who reproduced in words the emotion thus excited was a poet, the

rest are mechanical copyists of a pattern. [He excepts Keats and Coleridge] . . . If we were to suppose Milton placing genuine nature before his mind's eye we should have here to read the word "*blosmy*" in a metaphorical sense [*i.e.* as= 'with purple bark']. The primary sense, "covered with flowers," would not be appropriate in an English April. . . . I am afraid Milton's nightingale only perches on the spray because Chaucer's wood-pigeon "sings" from it.—*Sir Thopas*, st. 10.' So far (and farther in the same strain) Mark Pattison. 'Mark now, how a plain tale shall put him down.' In the first place, Dyer does *not* place the nightingale in Towey Vale; he merely mentions the bird as one of the properties of 'the purple evening.' Then as to the appropriateness of the many-bloomed spray to April, let us turn to Dorothy Wordsworth's Alfoxden *Journal*, 1798. That year, as everybody knows, 'the spring was late uncommonly'; even on Good Friday (April 6), 'the Spring is still advancing very slowly.' But on Easter Monday there comes a magical change: '*the sloe is in blossom*, the hawthorns green, the larches changed from black to green in two or three days.' Now the words, 'bloomy spray,' exactly describe a long spike of the sloe-bush in flower, gemmed from head to point with starlike white blossoms. 'The nightingale arrives in this country about, or rather before, the middle of April, the male, the song-bird, coming first, and being followed in ten days by the female. This is the "summer's front" of Shakespeare, Sonnet 102.'—M. Pattison.

ll. 97-105. The incident here related is recorded in the 'Gutch Memorandum Book' (British Museum, *Add.* MS. 27901) as follows: 'Hartley fell down and hurt himself. I caught him up angry and screaming—and ran out of doors. The moon caught his eye—he ceased crying immediately—and his eyes and the tears in them, how they glittered in the moonlight!' Cf. Wordsworth, *Evening Voluntaries*, XIII. (*To the Moon*), ll. 17-20; and *Christabel*, ll. 315-318.

The Nightingale was inserted here in place of *Lewti*, the sheet containing which was cancelled at the last moment (August 1798). *Lewti* had appeared in the *Morning Post*,

April 13, 1798, over the signature *Nicius Erythræus*, the pseudonym assumed in the seventeenth century by J. V. Rossi, the author of the delightful *Pinacotheca Imaginum illustrium virorum* (GARNETT). It was, however, an open secret that Coleridge was the writer, so that its appearance in the *Lyrical Ballads* would have defeated the anonymity of that experimental volume. Hence, doubtless, the poet's ultimate resolve to exclude it. *Lewti* is included in the Appendix to this volume.

THE FEMALE VAGRANT (page 40). This is an early work of Wordsworth's—his earliest of any length after the *Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* of 1793; and, save in its near approach to their absolute simplicity of diction and style, it has little in common with the *experimental* poems of 1797-8. In its opening situation—the ruin of a virtuous and high-spirited peasant by the wealthy tyrant whose will he has dared to gainsay: in its lurid picture of the horrors of war: in its sympathetic portrayal of the wild brood of gypsies—men lawless indeed, yet endued with virtues unknown to the purse-proud citizen—kindly, pitiful, open-handed: lastly, in its laborious accumulation of heart-rending circumstances, *The Female Vagrant* reveals unmistakably its early date. A part of the tale was written, Wordsworth tells us, in 1791-2; the remainder, probably, after midsummer, 1793, when *Guilt and Sorrow*, the longer poem (published 1842) in which the *Female Vagrant* came to be merged, was begun. The account of the hardships endured by the woman in America and of her state of mind on the voyage home was founded on the actual experience of a friend, as reported by her to the poet. *Guilt and Sorrow* was composed, wrote Wordsworth to Wrangham (December 1795) 'to expose the vices of the penal law, and the calamities of war as they affect individuals.'

When he finished *The Female Vagrant* (1793) Wordsworth was still fresh from the plastic hand of Michel Beaupuy, zealous for social reform, sanguine, humanitarian, visionary. It was time, he thought, that war should cease throughout the world; and cease it must if the nations, roused by their poet-

teachers, even now resolve with one consent on its extinction. Wherefore he, for lack of a worthier, will set the example of preaching this glorious crusade. Again—to descend to meaner argument—society, while it is bound to maintain the security of property, should also take measures to hinder wealth from becoming oppressive. 'Some wise and salutary regulations' are needed to 'counteract that inequality amongst mankind which proceeds from the present *fixed* disposition of their possessions.' It were surely to be hoped that 'the class of wretches called mendicants will not much longer shock the feelings of humanity.' But this desirable state of things cannot come to pass until society intervenes to prevent the present excessive accumulation of wealth in the hands of a (relatively) few individuals. Then—to say nothing of the tenure of the chief-magistracy—it is clear that the existing English mode of appointing judges is contrary to reason and common sense. To endue a man with authority for his lifetime is to shut the eyes to the weakness of human nature. The office of a judge on such terms is a trial too severe for our frail virtue. And hence the scandalous miscarriages that shame our courts misnamed 'of justice,' where the unfriended poor man sues in vain for protection against his wealthier and influential oppressor. These sentiments, and others like them, may easily be read between the lines of *The Female Vagrant*, and leaven yet more strongly the longer poem of which it forms a part. In that story the murderer was a good man: 'never on earth was gentler creature seen.' 'An evil world, and its hard law' were alone accountable for his crime. Such were Wordsworth's views in 1793. Three years later he had become aware of his error. *Now* he discerned that evil was ingrained in man's imperfect nature—an ineradicable taint; and looking back upon his former self—the sanguine enthusiast of 1793—he exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul:

> We look
> But at the surfaces of things; we hear
> Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old
> Driven out in troops to want and nakedness;
> Then grasp our swords and *rush upon a cure*

> *That flatters us, because it asks not thought:*
> The deeper malady is better hid;
> *The world is poisoned at the heart.—*
> *Borderers*, 1039-1046.

Thus *The Female Vagrant* is separated by a wide gulf from the poems of 1797-8. In the latter years Wordsworth would have held it wrong to draw a picture of such utter gloom, unrelieved by a single gleam of comfort. He found fault with Coleridge's ballad of *The Three Graves* (1798) as being 'too shocking and painful, and not sufficiently softened by any healing views.' And from 1802 onwards, according as his sentiments altered, the text of *The Female Vagrant* underwent modification. In 1802 st. i., iii., iv., and xiv. were struck out, and many verbal changes effected *passim*. In 1815 st. xviii. disappeared, leaving twenty-five out of the original thirty stanzas: and to these st. iii. and iv. were restored in 1820, after which the total remained unchanged. The (chief) textual changes are recorded in the *Aldine* Wordsworth, vol. ii.; more fully in the recent *Eversley* edition of the Poems, vol. i., pp. 79-107: they need not occupy us here. Coleridge heard Wordsworth recite *Guilt and Sorrow* when the two met for the first time at the house of Mr. Pinney, a Bristol merchant, in September or October 1795, and he has recorded his impressions of the poem in an eloquent passage of the *Biographia* (chap. iv.).

It may be added that by June 1796 the intimacy between the poets was such as to justify Coleridge in sending the MS. of *Guilt and Sorrow* to Charles Lamb, for perusal and transmission to Wordsworth, being then, or shortly to be, in London.

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL (page 52). Composed 1798. The first of Wordsworth's *experimental* Ballads (see *Advertisement*) in the volume, and perhaps the only one to which the term *lyrical ballad* does not strictly apply; that is, the only one of which it is *not* true that 'the feeling therein

developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.'—*Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, ed. 1800, vol. i. p. xvii. It is also, therefore, the one ballad of the lot which, had it ever been published as a broadside by Jemmy Catnach or Johnny Pitts of the Seven Dials, would infallibly have brought grist to the mill of the 'flying stationers' and 'standing patterers' of the day. 'Of two descriptions . . . each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.' On this account 'I related in metre the Tale of GOODY BLAKE —one of the rudest in this collection. I wished to draw attention to the truth that the power of the human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous. The truth is an important one; the fact (for it is a *fact*) is a valuable illustration of it. And I have the satisfaction of knowing that it has been communicated to many hundreds of people who would never have heard of it, had it not been narrated as a Ballad, and in a more impressive metre than is usual in Ballads.'—*Preface*, 1800, p. xxxv. *Goody Blake* appeared in the *Ipswich Magazine* of April 1799 (p. 118), along with a letter addressed to the editors, calling the Suffolk farmers' attention to 'that excellent ballad,' and adding: 'The thing is a fact, and told by one of the first physicians of the day, as having happened in the south of England.' The story occurs in Darwin's *Zoonomia*, ed. 1801, vol. iv. p. 68. The only details omitted by Wordsworth are that the farmer 'had a sieve over his face as he lay; and from this one insane idea he kept his bed above twenty years for fear of the cold air, till at length he died.' *Goody Blake* and *The Birth of Love*—Wordsworth's version of the Vicomte de Ségur's *L'Éducation de l'Amour*—appear in *The Beauties of British Poetry: Selected by Sidney Melmoth, Esq.*, 3rd ed., 1807. Both are marked *Anon.* The ballad is one of the group which includes *The Ancyent Marinere*, *The Wanderings of Cain*, *The Three Graves*, and *Peter Bell* (see *Introduction*). It has been admirably rendered into French by M. Émile Legouis (*Quelques Poèmes de W. W. traduits en*

vers par E. L., Paris, Cerf, 1896). In the same volume, faithful and spirited versions will be found of *Lines Written in Early Spring*, *To My Sister*, *Expostulation and Reply*, *The Tables Turned*, and *Tintern Abbey*—all in the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798.

LINES WRITTEN AT A SMALL DISTANCE, Etc. (page 57). Composed 1798. March 3rd and 6th are described as 'mild' days in Dorothy's *Journal*. From 1845 the title has been *To my Sister* simply. This delightful poem should be read along with *Expostulation and Reply* and *The Tables Turned*. The three together contain the very essence of Wordsworth's Faith and Doctrine. What, then, it will be asked: Is that doctrine nothing more than the glorification of the purely animal delights here enumerated? Has the poet no higher counsel to give than this—to come out into the open and feel the hot sun strike upon us, and the breath of spring caress us, while we listen to the birds' sweet jargoning, and watch the budding twigs spread out their fan to catch the breeze? Is it to a mere carnival of the senses that he invites us? Not so. Wordsworth's doctrine is, indeed, sensuous; but it is far from—rather, let us say, it is the very opposite of—sensuality. 'Not for its own sake does Wordsworth glorify sensation, nor for the pleasure or pain which accompanies it, but for what it reveals, because each single impression, taken as a whole, with all the mystery in which it is enveloped, contains a conception of the world.'[1] The senses are precious, because they are the gate through which the soul passes on to the beatific intuition of the supreme Reality — because through them alone the soul can win

> Authentic tidings of invisible things;
> Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
> And central peace, subsisting at the heart
> Of endless agitation.

[1] *Early Life of Wordsworth*, by Émile Legouis. Translated by J. W. Matthews (Dent), p. 452.

But that the objects of sense may thus act as conductors to the super-sensible world, it is necessary that they shall be seized by the IMAGINATION—that is, by the soul's power of clearest insight and absolute prehension—the faculty that endows the poet with his falcon's eye, his inevitable ear, his blind man's touch—Vision at once and Illumination. In her mighty grasp the outward world crumbles—beneath the blaze of her glance fades, dissolves, and 'defecates to a pure transparency,' till at length it vanishes utterly, and 'the light of sense goes out, but with a flash that has revealed the invisible world.' Thus these moments of ecstasy that play so large a part in our spiritual development, while they suspend and supersede sensation, yet cannot come to pass without it. And hence it is that the poet recognises

> In *nature and the language of the sense*
> The anchor of our purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of our hearts, and soul
> Of all our moral being.

This poem is a protest against the austere stoicism inculcated by Godwin, who professed a contemptuous indifference to pleasure and pain: 'We first stand in need of a certain animal subsistence and shelter, and after that, our only true felicity consists in the expansion of our intellectual powers, the knowledge of truth, and the practice of virtue.'—*Political Justice*, ii. 833 (1st ed.). Wordsworth's aim, on the other hand, is to show how 'sensations sweet, felt in the blood and felt along the heart,' serve to tranquillise and invigorate the spirit, and aid effectually in inspiring

> That best portion of a good man's life—
> His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love.—*Tintern Abbey.*

Thus does Wordsworth pay homage 'to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows and feels and lives and moves.' —*Preface*, 1802. See Legouis, *op. cit.* pp. 448-459.

l. 13. *Edward*: Basil Montagu. See *Anecdote for Fathers*, note.

Line 26, 'the definite extravagance of which challenged opposition' (DOWDEN), was altered in 1837 to 'Than years of toiling reason.'

SIMON LEE (page 59). Composed (probably March) 1798. Cf. Dorothy's *Journal*, March 10: 'Coleridge, William, and I walked in the evening to the top of the hill . . . the old man at the top of the hill gathering furze.' Simon Lee had been huntsman to the St. Albyns; his cottage stood on the common, hard by the entrance to Alfoxden Park. The 'village' (l. 32) was Holford; the 'waterfall' (l. 31) that famous one which formed 'The Mare's Pool' in the wooded glen a quarter of a mile from Alfoxden House; cf. *Ancyent Marinere*, ll. 358-361. 'No poem of Wordsworth's underwent so many . . . changes as *Simon Lee*. . . . The first seven stanzas, which nearly reached their final form in 1832, are found in different texts and different sequence in 1798, 1802, 1820, 1827, 1832. . . . Words and lines were altered, stanzas shifted in position, and new stanzas constructed by connecting the halves of certain stanzas with the halves of others' (DOWDEN). The object of these perplexing changes has never yet been explained: it was to broaden and emphasise the contrast between Simon's radiant youth and decrepit age. In the text of 1798, contrasted traits of youth and age jostle each other throughout the several stanzas i.-vii. in such wise as to produce a confused impression; in 1832 the traits and evidences of Simon's early vigour are concentrated within stanzas i.-iii., while those of his sad decline are brought together in stanzas iv.-vii., the contrast being marked by the phrase: 'But oh, the heavy change!' (*Lycidas*, l. 37), stanza iv. l. 1. The following table, constructed by the editor, indicates the various transpositions of stanzas and half-stanzas between 1798 and 1832. *a*=ll. 1-4, *b*=ll. 5-8 of a stanza.

Edd. 1798, 1800.	Edd. 1802-1815.	Ed. 1820.	Ed. 1827.	Edd. 1832-1849.
1	1	1*a* / 2*b*	1*a* / 2*b*	1*a* / 2*b*
2	2	3	4*a* / 3*b*	3*a* / 5*b*
3	3	4*a* / 5*b*	3*a* / 5*b*	6
4	5	6	6	4*a* / 3*b*
5	6	5*a* / 4*b*	5*a* / 4*b*	5*a* / 4*b*
6	4	7	8	8
7	7	8	7	7
8	8	9	9	9

In 1827 ll. 37-40 became:

> In those proud days he little cared
> For husbandry or tillage,
> To blither tasks did Simon rouse
> The sleepers of the village;

and ll. 25-28 became:

> Worn out by hunting feats—bereft
> By time of friends and kindred, see!
> Old Simon to the world is left
> In liveried poverty.

In 1832 ll. 25, 26 became:

> But oh, the heavy change!—bereft
> Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see!

Simon's 'long blue livery coat' was got rid of in 1820; in 1827

he is no longer bereft of an eye. All these changes serve to cleanse the poem of certain faults specified by Coleridge in 1817 (*Biog. Lit.*, ed. 1847, ii. p. 152) as characteristic of Wordsworth's poetic style: 'occasional prolixity, repetition, and an eddying instead of progression of thought.' The object of *Simon Lee* seems to be to vindicate the instinctive character of the emotion of gratitude as against Godwin, who represented it as an unjust and degrading sentiment, having its origin in the unequal distribution of wealth, influence, etc.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS (page 63). Composed in the spring of 1798. The boy was Basil, son of Wordsworth's intimate friend and brother-Cantab, Basil Montagu, and grandson of John Montagu fourth Earl of Sandwich and the famous Martha Ray. (See *The Thorn*, note.) The child lived with the Wordsworths from September 1795 till midsummer 1798. The incident of the poem, as M. Legouis observes, was undoubtedly an actual occurrence, but Wordsworth partly masks the truth by substituting the name of Kilve (a village on the Bristol Channel about a mile from Alfoxden) for Racedown, and Llyswen (John Thelwall's farm on the Wye) for Alfoxden. In 1817 Coleridge expressly charged this poem with the faults specified in the preceding note as noticeable in the *Simon Lee* of 1798 (*Biog. Lit.*, *loc. cit.*)—prolixity, repetition, and an eddying of thought; and in 1827 certain textual changes were effected with the view of obviating the charge. Stanzas vii., viii. were compressed into one; l. 14 ('To think, and think,' etc.) became: 'Some fond regrets to entertain'; and stanza vi. was expanded into two, thus (we give the final form reached in 1836):

> The green earth echoed to the feet
> Of lambs that bounded through the glade
> From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
> From sunshine back to shade.
>
> Birds warbled round me—and each trace
> Of inward sadness had its charm;
> Kilve, thought I, was a favoured place,
> And so is Liswyn farm.

From 1845 on, the question (l. 47) is put to Edward not *five* (*ne quid nimis*) but *three* times. The purport of the ballad is somewhat obscure. 'To one who had learned from Godwin that lying is opposed to human nature, and would never have existed but for the indirect compulsion of societies and religions, it must have been a revelation to hear a child tell a bold and harmless lie, without any apparent motive and uninfluenced by interest or fear. . . . The discovery of the mysterious origin and devious ways of falsehood must have been a revelation to one who had dreamed of a day when universal truth should reign in naked simplicity.'—*Early Life of Wordsworth* (Émile Legouis), translated by J. W. Matthews (Dent), p. 314.

From 1800 to 1843, the title of this ballad ran: *Anecdote for Fathers, showing how the Practice of Lying may be taught.* In 1845 it became: *Anecdote for Fathers*; and the motto was added: *Retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam si coges.*—Eusebius. The Greek hexameter here translated—

κλεῖε βίην κάρτος τε λόγων· ψευδηγόρα λέξω—

was the Delphian oracle's rebuke to certain persons who tried to extort an answer by force. It occurs in a passage cited by Eusebius (*Præpar. Evang.*, vi. 5) from Porphyry: Περὶ τῆς ἐκ λογίων φιλοσοφίας.

WE ARE SEVEN (page 66). Composed 1798, and, like the *Anecdote for Fathers*, founded on fact. Wordsworth and the little maid forgathered at Goodrich Castle, on the Wye, Herefordshire, in the summer of 1793. The poet made this ballad while pacing to and fro in the grove at Alfoxden: he 'composed the last stanza first, having begun with the last line.' Coleridge crowned the tale with an impromptu prefatory stanza setting forth the *motif*, into which he playfully hitched the name of an absent friend, James Tobin,[1] the

[1] 'Dear brother Jim' was an incorrigible meddler, and in April 1804 roused the habitually mild Coleridge to a passion of resentment by an untimely indulgence of his 'rage for monition' (*Anima Poetæ*, p. 68; *Letters of S. T. Coleridge*, p. 474). On the eve of the appearance of *Lyrical Ballads* (August 1798) he besought Wordsworth, in tragic

brother of John Tobin, playwright and author of *The Honeymoon*. Wordsworth objected to 'dear brother Jim' as ludicrous, yet retained it in the text of all four editions of the *Lyrical Ballads*. '. . . A simple child' appears in the first collective edition of the poems in 1815. The ballad was written to show 'the obscurity and perplexity which in childhood attend our notion of death, or rather our utter inability to admit that notion,' however forcibly thrust upon us by the logic of facts. The theme reappears in the *Ode: Intimations of Immortality*, etc. (1802-1806):—

> 'Thou [child] *over whom thy Immortality*
> *Broods* like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
> *A Presence which is not to be put by;*
> *To whom the grave*
> *Is but a lonely bed* without the sense or sight
> Of day or the warm light,
> *A place of thought* where we in waiting lie,' etc.

In the *Ode*, however, as in the *Essay on Epitaphs* (see below), the child's invincible sense of immortality is traced to a nobler origin than mere spontaneous energy: 'If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without an assurance of immortality. . . . Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature, must that man be, who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal spirits with which the lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational creature, is endowed. . . . The sense of immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her offspring,' etc.

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING (page 69). Composed 1798, in the wooded glen a quarter of a mile from

accents, to cancel *We are Seven*, which, if published, would, he averred, make the author 'everlastingly ridiculous.' The poet thanked him smilingly, but added that *We are Seven* at all events should take its chance.

Alfoxden House. 'It was a chosen resort of mine. The brook ran down a sloping rock, so as to make a waterfall, considerable for that country; and across the pool below had fallen a tree—an ash, if I rightly remember—from which rose, perpendicularly, boughs in search of the light intercepted by the deep shade above. The boughs bore leaves of green, that for want of sunshine had faded into almost lily-white; and from the underside of this natural sylvan bridge depended long and beautiful tresses of ivy, which waved gently in the breeze, that might, poetically speaking, be called the breath of the waterfall. This motion varied, of course, in proportion to the power of water in the brook' (W. W.).

By 1798 Wordsworth had quite shaken off the despondency induced by futile analysis (cf. *Prelude*, xi. 293-305), and had regained his 'natural graciousness of mind'—(xii. 50)—'his cheerfulness, and love, and genial faith.' 'Still there remained with him something of the Revolutionary contrast between nature—simple, beneficent, glad—and society, which so often does wrong to the life of the natural man. In the main, the poems of this date fall into two groups—those which tell of a happy communing with Nature, and those which present the passions of men and women who suffer through their affections. A motto for both groups might be found in a stanza [ll. 5-8] from *Lines Written in Early Spring*:

To her fair works did nature link, etc.'

See *Poems by W. W.*, ed. DOWDEN, *Athenæum Press Series* (Ginn & Co., Boston, 1897). *Introduction*, p. lx.

The same contrast between the joy of Nature and the sorrows of humanity appears in Coleridge's *Religious Musings* (1796)

> . . . such perfect forms
> As erst were wont,—bright visions of the day!—
> To float before [me], when, the summer noon,
> Beneath some arched romantic rock reclined,
> [I] felt the sea-breeze lift [my] youthful locks;
> Or in the month of blossoms, at mild eve,
> Wandering with desultory feet inhaled
> The wafted perfumes, and the flocks and woods

And many-tinted streams and setting sun . .
Ecstatic gazed! then homeward as [I] strayed,
Cast the sad eye to earth, and inly mused
Why there was misery in a world so fair.

ll. 21, 22. The egoism of these lines disappears in 1820 (in 1827 'be' is substituted for 'is'):

If this belief from Heaven is sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan, etc.

THE THORN (page 71). Composed March 1798. Cf. Dorothy's *Journal*, March 19: 'William and Basil and I walked to the hill-top. We were met on our return by a severe hailstorm. William wrote some lines describing a stunted thorn.' And April 20: 'Came home the Crookham way, by the thorn, and the "little muddy pond" . . . *Peter Bell* begun.' The story is a pure invention. Passing by during the storm on March 19, Wordsworth was struck with the change wrought in the aspect of an insignificant thorn by the mere accident of mist and rain, and he asked himself whether, by setting his imagination to work, he might not contrive to render the thorn as universally and permanently impressive as it was at that moment to his eye. The result was *The Thorn*, which was composed with great rapidity. The *Advertisement* of 1798 tells us that the poem 'is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person'; and in 1800 a note was added describing the imaginary narrator as follows:

'The character which I have here introduced speaking is sufficiently common. The Reader will perhaps have a general notion of it, if he has ever known a man, a captain of a small trading vessel, for example, who being past the middle age of life, had retired upon an annuity or small independent income to some village or country town of which he was not a native, or in which he had not been accustomed to live. Such men, having little to do, become credulous and talkative from indolence; and from the same cause, and other predisposing causes by which it is probable that such men may have been affected, they are prone to superstition. On which account it appeared to me proper to select a character like this to exhibit some of the general laws by which superstition acts upon the mind. Superstitious men are almost always men of slow faculties and deep feelings; their minds are not loose, but

adhesive; they have a reasonable share of imagination, by which word I mean the faculty which produces impressive effects out of simple elements; but they are utterly destitute of fancy, the power by which pleasure and surprise are excited by sudden varieties of situation and by accumulated imagery.

It was my wish in this poem to show the manner in which such men cleave to the same ideas; and to follow the turns of passion, always different, yet not palpably different, by which their conversation is swayed. I had two objects to attain; first, to represent a picture which should not be unimpressive, yet consistent with the character that should describe it; secondly, while I adhered to the style in which such persons describe, to take care that words, which in their minds are impregnated with passion, should likewise convey passion to Readers who are not accustomed to sympathize with men feeling in that manner or using such language. It seemed to me that this might be done by calling in the assistance of Lyrical and rapid Metre. It was necessary that the Poem, to be natural, should in reality move slowly; yet I hoped that, by the aid of the metre, to those who should at all enter into the spirit of the Poem, it would appear to move quickly. The Reader will have the kindness to excuse this note, as I am sensible that an introductory Poem is necessary to give the Poem its full effect.

The Thorn is perhaps the most ambitious of Wordsworth's poems of 1798, but it is not a happy success. 'The subject, instead of being harmonised by the poet's genius into tragic and pitiful and terrible beauty, retains in his hands the dreadfulness of a shocking reality. . . . Here on a sixth or seventh reading the effect remains identical—an effect of unmodified and haunting horror' (SWINBURNE). The ultimate cause of this failure lies no doubt in Wordsworth's levelling theory of poetic diction, which discovered in 'the conversation of men in the middle and lower classes of society'—'purified from all lasting causes of dislike or disgust'—the fittest language for poetry, as the most permanent and philosophic. Had Wordsworth been content to cast his theory to the winds, and meditate at large upon his subject until emotional musing had ripened into inspiration, the result would have been a poem of consummate beauty, such as *The Affliction of Margaret*—'a translation of natural thought and feeling into the sovereign style, the eternal and universal dialect, of imaginative and passionate poetry' (SWINBURNE). But unluckily the poet was resolved to labour in his self-imposed

fetters; and so he turns himself for the nonce into 'an elderly captain of a small trading vessel, retired,' etc., and proceeds to translate the thoughts and feelings which he conceived the story of the outcast Martha was likely to evoke in the mind of such a person, into his proper idiom. And here it is that Wordsworth fails, through lack of dramatic power. The skipper is the palest, thinnest, least palpable and convincing of phantoms—the veriest shadow of a shade. Or—to vary the metaphor—Wordsworth in this ballad assumes a mask which is at once cumbersome and ineffectual—which betrays the individual behind it, and serves but to embarrass and impede his utterance. Here and there throughout the story the true lineaments of the poet peep out through his clumsy disguise:[1] in the description of the Thorn—'a wretched thing, forlorn, not higher than a two years' child'; in the imaginative ascription of conscious purpose to the mosses, 'creeping upwards from the earth and clasping the thorn close to drag it to the ground'; in the picture of the infant's grave with its 'mossy network green, red and pearly white': above all, in the wonderful lines—*quam nihil ad genium naucleri!*

> At all times of the day and night
> This wretched woman thither goes,
> *And she is known to every star,*
> *And every wind that blows.*

Indeed, the numerous changes alone which, at various times between 1815 and 1845, were effected in the text of this ballad, suffice to prove that Wordsworth himself came after a while to perceive, if not frankly to acknowledge, his error; for they consist with few exceptions in the substitu-

[1] 'In the story of *The Thorn*, with all the attention we have been able to bestow, we have been utterly unable to detect any characteristic traits, either of a seaman, an annuitant, or a stranger in a country town. It is a style, on the contrary, which we should ascribe without hesitation to a certain poetical fraternity in the West of England [Bristol], and which, we verily believe, never was, and never will be, used by any one out of that fraternity.'—*Edin. Rev.*, xxiii. (April 1808), p. 137.

tion of refined and poetical, and therefore dramatically incongruous, lines or phrases, for lines or phrases rude and prosaic indeed, but for that very reason dramatically true and proper. *E.g.*: ll. 32, 33 became (1820):

> Though but of compass small, and bare
> To thirsty suns and parching air.

ll. 120, 121 became (1820):

> While friends and kindred all approved
> Of him whom tenderly she loved.

ll. 129-132 became (1815):

> A pang of pitiless dismay
> Into her soul was sent;
> A fire was kindled in her breast,
> Which might not burn itself to rest.

ll. 148-151 became (1820):

> Last Christmas-eve we talked of this,
> And grey-haired Wilfred of the glen
> Held that the unborn infant wrought, *etc.*

It is clear that in a tale supposed to be related by a superannuated skipper these would-be improvements, whatever their intrinsic value, must be pronounced dramatically false and out of keeping. Several minor alterations—some of a tendency similar to those above given—are here omitted. ll. 103-114 were struck out in 1820, in which year five considerable changes were introduced in consequence of the following strictures on *The Thorn* in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, 1817 (ed. 1847, ii. p. 51): 'In *The Thorn* the poet himself acknowledges in a note the necessity of an introductory poem in which he should have pourtrayed the character of the person from whom the words of the poem are supposed to proceed: a superstitious man moderately imaginative, of slow faculties and deep feelings, "a captain of a small trading vessel, for example. . . . Such men, having

nothing to do, become credulous and talkative from indolence." But in a poem, still more in a lyric poem (and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* alone prevents me from extending the remark even to dramatic poetry, if indeed even the Nurse itself can be deemed altogether a case in point) it is not possible to imitate truly a dull and garrulous discourser without repeating the effects of dulness and garrulity. [Southey's criticism in *Critical Review*, Oct. 1798.] However this may be, I dare assert that the parts . . . which might as well or still better have proceeded from the poet's own imagination, and have been spoken in his own character, are those which have given, and will continue to give, universal delight; and that the passages exclusively appropriate to the supposed narrator [ll. 32, 33; 104-111; 112-166, except 144-147] are felt by many unprejudiced and unsophisticated hearts as sudden and unpleasant sinkings from the height to which the poet had previously lifted them, and to which he again re-elevates both himself and his reader.'

The Thorn should be compared with William Taylor's version of Bürger's *Der Pfarrer's Tochter von Taubenhain*, which appeared in the *Monthly Magazine*, 1796, under the title of *The Lass of Fair Wone*, and was reprinted in Melmoth's *Beauties of the British Poets* (1801; 3rd ed., 1807. It is also given in Taylor's *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, ii. pp. 32-40, where it is entitled *The Parson's Daughter*).

In Bürger's ballad the parson's daughter, betrayed by a profligate noble, is flogged and turned out of doors by her father. After a fruitless appeal to the seducer to do her right, she returns to 'the parson's bower of yew,' where she stabs her new-born son with a silver hair-pin, and buries him beside the pond hard by in a shallow grave which she herself has 'torn with bleeding nails.' She is hanged for the crime:

> Hard by the bower her gibbet stands,
> Her skull is still to show;
> It seems to eye *the barren grave*
> *Three spans in length below.*

And from the grave 'where grows no grass, Where falls no

rain nor dew,' a blue fire issues after dark, to steal along the neighbouring pond:

> And nightly, when the ravens come,
> Her ghost is seen to glide;
> Pursues, and tries to quench the flame,
> And pines the pool beside.

Some find here the source of Wordsworth's ballad: ll. 32, 33 of *The Thorn*, in particular, they think, were suggested by the fourth line of the first stanza quoted above. But the crazy outcast, awatch at the graveside of her dead infant, is a figure that is constantly flitting across the page in the sentimental literature of the time (see, *e.g. The Borderers*, ll. 380-395). Besides, Dorothy's *Journal* shows that there actually was a 'little muddy pond' beside the Thorn on the hillside; and in Bürger's ballad it is the *grave*, not the pond, that is *drei Spannen lang*; also the grave is bare and blasted, not, as in *The Thorn*, covered with fair mossy network. Quite recently[1] it has been conjectured that, when he wrote "'tis three feet long and two feet wide" etc., Wordsworth was recalling Chiabrera's description of his house: 'Di cui l'ampiezza venticinque braccia Forse consume.' It is perhaps scarcely necessary to find a warranty for these two lines, which, despite the absurd outcry raised against them, are perhaps the most dramatically fit and proper in the whole ballad. But if we are to look about for a probable source, such might be found in the burden of a ballad printed in Motherwell's *Minstrelsy* (1827), given also, but with a different burden, in Johnson's *Musical Museum* (1787-1803), and with yet a third, in Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs*, 1776. We print Johnson's text with Motherwell's burden:

1

She sat down below a thorn,
(*Three, three, and three by three;*)
And there she has her sweet babe born,
(*Three, three, and thirty-three*).

[1] *History of Italian Literature*, by R. Garnett, C.B., LL.D., p. 277, *note*.

'Smile na sae sweet, my bonny babe,
An ye smile sae sweet, ye'll smile me deid.'

3

She 's ta'en out her little penknife,
And twin'd the sweet babe o' its life.

She 's howket a grave by the light o' the moon,
And there she 's buried her sweet babe in, *etc. etc.*

It is hard to guess why Wordsworth should have thought fit to 'hitch in' to his ballad the name of his friend Basil Montagu's mother, the celebrated Martha Ray: impossible to suppose that he might have been unaware of the relationship. Martha Ray, the daughter of a staymaker in Holywell Street, and the mistress of John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, was shot by the Rev. James Hackman, a rejected suitor, when leaving Covent Garden Theatre, April 7, 1779. Hackman was tried, convicted, and hanged within the fortnight. Basil Montagu was the woman's second son.

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK (page 82). The incident here related occurred in Holford, a village hard by Alfoxden Manor. Godwin had taught that property was the cause of every vice, and the source of all the wretchedness, of the poor. Wordsworth here exhibits 'this so-called evil, the offspring of human institutions, as a vigorous instinct closely interwoven with the noblest feelings' (LEGOUIS, *Early Life of Wordsworth*, translated by J. W. Matthews, p. 310). In 1800 the man's family was reduced from ten (l. 41) to six. Wordsworth would exhibit a typical, not an exceptional, case of distress.

THE DUNGEON (page 86). Composed 1797: from *Osorio*, Act v.; *Remorse*, Act v. sc. i. Lines 20-30 should be read along with *Excursion*, iv. ll. 1207 1222—a passage written as far back as 1797, and quoted by Coleridge in the letter to his brother George, already referred to, dated April 1798: also with the impassioned apostrophe to the Forms of Nature.

Prelude, xii. 9-43. In both places Wordsworth records his own deepest experience of *Natura Medicatrix*.

THE MAD MOTHER (page 88). Composed 1798. The subject was given to Wordsworth by a Bristol lady, who had seen a poor woman such as is here described. In this ballad, and in *The Idiot Boy*, the poet celebrates the beauty and pathos of *unreasoning* affection. Cf. Legouis, *op. cit.*, p. 312. It is easy to trace in *The Mad Mother* the influence of that exquisite 'Scottish song,' *Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament*. Percy's *Reliques*, ed. Walford (1880), p. 223; *Essay Supplementary to the Preface* (1815), *Oxford Wordsworth*, p. 950.

THE IDIOT BOY (page 92). Composed 1798. The tale is an invention, based upon the words of the Boy in the last stanza, 'The cocks did crow,' etc., which were reported to the poet by Tom Poole, the tanner of Nether Stowey. *The Idiot Boy* and *The Ancyent Marinere* are the only pieces graced with a separate sub-title in the volume of 1798. Probably Wordsworth had at one time meant to close the book with the *Rime of Johnny Foy*, as an offset (an antidote?) to the opening *Rime of the Ancyent Marinere*. In the *Prelude*, xii. ll. 398-407, *The Thorn* and *The Idiot Boy* are singled out, along with *Christabel* and the *Ancyent Marinere*, as the representative productions of their respective authors during the golden prime when

> Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge they roved
> Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs.

All the more deplorable is it that, just as the tragic effect of *The Thorn* is spoilt by the poet's lack of dramatic power, even so the humour and pathos of *The Idiot Boy* are sadly marred by his clumsy attempts at mirth. Hazlitt, in his pen-portrait of Wordsworth, speaks of a certain 'convulsive inclination to laughter about the mouth, a good deal at variance with the solemn, stately expression of the rest of his face.' Not less awkward and incongruous, surely, are the heavy pleasantries in which the poet of *Peter Bell* and *The Idiot Boy* seeks an occasional vent for his exuberant cheerfulness. 'At rare times in his poetry Wordsworth shows an

inclination for frolic; it is the frolic of good spirits in one habitually grave, and he cannot caper lightly and gracefully' (Dowden). In order fully to enter into the poet's purpose in the ballad before us we must read with care his correspondence with John Wilson (*Christopher North*) in the summer of 1802. Wilson frankly confesses his inability to admire *The Idiot Boy*: 'The affection of Betty Foy has nothing in it to excite interest. It exhibits merely the effects of that instinctive feeling inherent in the constitution of every animal. The excessive fondness of the mother disgusts us . . . to me it appears almost unnatural that a person in a state of complete idiotism should excite the warmest feelings of attachment in the breast even of his mother.' Wordsworth's portrait of the Idiot is admirably done: 'I admire the talents of the *artist*, the *picture* disgusts me inexpressibly.' And, since nothing is a fit subject for poetry which does not please, it follows that in choosing this subject the poet has committed an error.

Wordsworth rejoins: Granted that the end of poetry is to give immediate pleasure, the question follows: give pleasure to whom? 'I answer, Human Nature, as it has been and ever will be. But where are we to find the best measure of this? I answer, from within; by stripping our own hearts naked, and by looking out of ourselves to those men who lead the simplest lives—men who have never known false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criticisms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling; or who, having known these things, have outgrown them. . . .

'Gentlemen, persons of fortune, professional men, ladies—these persons are, it is true, a part of Human Nature, but we err lamentably if we suppose them to be fair representatives of the vast mass of human existence.' A man must have gone in and out 'among cottages and fields, and among children, before his judgment upon *The Idiot Boy* would be in any way decisive with me. . . . The loathing which many people have at the sight of an idiot, is a feeling which, though having some foundation in human nature, is not necessarily attached to it in any virtuous degree, but is owing in a great measure to a false delicacy . . . a certain want of compre-

hensiveness of thinking and feeling. Persons in the lower classes of society have little or nothing of this. If an idiot is born in a poor man's house, it must be taken care of, and cannot be boarded out as it would be by gentlefolks. . . .

'*I have often applied to idiots, in my own mind, that sublime expression of Scripture that* THEIR LIFE IS HIDDEN WITH GOD. They are worshipped, probably from a feeling of this sort, in several parts of the East. . . . I have, indeed, often looked upon the conduct of parents, in the lower ranks of society, toward idiots as a great triumph of the human heart. IT IS THERE THAT WE SEE THE STRENGTH, DISINTERESTEDNESS, AND GRANDEUR OF LOVE; nor have I ever been able to contemplate an object that calls out so many excellent and virtuous sentiments without finding it hallowed thereby, and having something in me which bears down before it, like a deluge, every feeble sensation of disgust and aversion.'

ll. 347-351. This stanza seems to prove, what Wordsworth in the Fenwick note to the *Evening Walk* apparently implies, that he commenced poet at the age of fourteen. His earliest printed composition—the sonnet signed *Axiologus*—(*European Magazine*, March 1787)—appeared in his seventeenth year.

Stanzas iii. and v. were struck out in 1827.

LINES WRITTEN NEAR RICHMOND (page 111). Composed 1789, in the poet's third year at S. John's College, Cambridge—the outcome, so he tells us, of a solitary walk along the Cam. In 1800 the poem was divided, and stanzas i. and ii. headed: *Lines written when sailing in a Boat at Evening*; while the remainder, in 1802, received the title of *Remembrance of Collins, written upon the Thames near Richmond*.

l. 29. 'Such heart did *once* the poet bless.' The words *once* here and *later* in l. 30 have reference to Collins's *Ode on the Poetical Character*, and his *Ode on the Death of Mr. Thomson*. The latter reference Wordsworth explains in a footnote to l. 30; the former, oddly enough, he leaves unexplained, nor has it, so far as the editor is aware, been pointed out before. Wordsworth cordially admired Collins, whom he quotes five times in the poems of 1793. See Coleridge's reference to the *Ode on the Poetical Character.—Letters of S. T. C.*, p. 196

(S. T. C. to Thelwall, Dec. 1796). The lines quoted in Lamb's letter to Coleridge of Dec. 10, 1796, which Canon Ainger failed to trace to their source, are taken, with characteristic variations, from this *Ode*. Lamb cites thus: 'but from

> The sainted growing woof
> The teasing troubles keep aloof.

Collins's lines actually run:

> [ll. 41, 42.] The dangerous Passions kept aloof,
> Far from the sainted growing woof.

Coleridge (*Religious Musings*, l. 369) borrows a phrase from l. 47 ('And the shadowy tribes of Mind'), where he speaks of David Hartley:

> He of mortal kind
> Wisest, he first who marked the ideal tribes
> Up the fine fibres through the sentient brain.

l. 34. In 1802 the word 'him' in this line was italicised, 'because,' says Professor Dowden, 'the oar is suspended not for Thomson but for Collins.' ll. 33, 34 recall stanza iv. of Collins's *Ode on the Death of Mr. Thomson*:

> Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
> When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
> And oft suspend the dashing oar
> To bid his gentle spirit rest.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY (page 113). Composed 1798. In the *Advertisement* to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, Wordsworth states that this and the following poem 'arose out of a conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of Moral Philosophy.' Who was this 'friend'? Assuredly, neither Coleridge nor James Mackintosh (*Eversley Wordsworth*, vol. i. p. 272, *note*). The place of these poems in the volume makes it probable that they belong to the early summer of 1798. Now, during that season Hazlitt paid a three weeks' visit (probably May 27-June 17) to Coleridge at Stowey; and at this time Hazlitt could talk of

little else than the Moral Philosophers, Butler, Mandeville, Hume, Helvetius, Hartley, Adam Smith: nay, he was even then busied over his *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, that dry, tough metaphysical *choke-pear*—so the author himself designates it—which Cowper's publisher and Wordsworth's (of 1793), Johnson of S. Paul's Churchyard, published for him in 1805. In a subsequent account of his visit to Coleridge (*My First Acquaintance with Poets*) Hazlitt relates that one evening, while the four friends were returning from Alfoxden to Stowey—but he shall speak his own words: 'I got into a metaphysical argument with Wordsworth, while Coleridge was explaining the different notes of the nightingale to his sister, in which we neither of us succeeded in making ourselves perfectly clear and intelligible.' Doubtless it was in this very conversation that *Expostulation and Reply*, and *The Tables Turned*, originated.

ll. 9-12. 'To find no contradiction in the union of old and new, to contemplate the ANCIENT OF DAYS with feelings as fresh, as if they then sprang forth at His own fiat, this characterises the minds that feel the riddle of the world, and may help to unravel it! To carry on the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood, to combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances which every day for perhaps forty years had rendered familiar—"with Sun and Moon and Stars throughout the year, And Man and Woman"—this is the character and privilege of genius, and one of the marks which distinguish genius from talents.' (COLERIDGE: Note dated Oct. 28, 1803, expanded in *The Friend*, ed. 1818, i. 183. See *Anima Poetæ*, p. 41.)

Wordsworth, outstretched upon 'the old grey stone,' sees

> things viewed
> By poets in old time, and higher up
> By the first men, earth's first inhabitants.

Presently, as he broods, the light of sense fades and goes out; eye and ear forget their functions and sleep undisturbed; he is laid asleep in body and becomes a living soul; and while this brief trance or ecstasy lasts he 'converses as he may' (l. 30) with the soul of external nature—communes in high

transport with every form of creature through earth and heaven, as it looks towards the Uncreated with a countenance of adoration, with an eye of love (*Prelude*, ii. 411-414).

l. 21. 'Nor less I deem that there are Powers.' Cf. *Kilchurn Castle*, 6-9:

> Oh! there is life that breathes not; Powers there are
> That touch each other to the quick in modes
> Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
> No soul to dream of.

THE TABLES TURNED (page 115). Composed 1798. Cf. *Lines Written at a Small Distance, etc.*, notes. Both are spousal strains, celebrating the spirit and power of joy 'which, wedding Nature to us, gives in dower a new Earth and new Heaven.' Or they may be described as a glorification of *sense*, even as *Expostulation, etc.*, is a glorification of *reverie*.

ll. 21-24. In the noble apostrophe to Nature which opens Book xii. of the *Prelude*, Wordsworth illustrates the educative power of her 'motions of delight,' thus:

> Ye breezes and soft airs
> Whose subtle intercourse with breathing flowers,
> Feelingly watched, might teach Man's haughty race
> How without injury to take, to give
> Without offence; *ye who, as if to show*
> *The wondrous influence of power gently used,*
> *Bend the complying heads of lordly pines,*
> And, with a touch, shift the stupendous clouds
> Through the whole compass of the sky. . . .
> And you, *ye groves, whose ministry it is*
> *To interpose the covert of your shades,*
> *Even as a sleep, between the heart of man*
> *And outward troubles, between man himself,*
> *Not seldom, and his own uneasy heart:* etc.

ll. 25-28. The poet contrasts that knowledge which is 'the wedding of man's feeling intellect to this goodly universe in love and holy passion,' with

The repetitions wearisome of sense
Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no place;
Where knowledge, ill begun in cold remark
On outward things, with formal inference ends;
Or if the mind turn inward, she recoils
At once—or, not recoiling, is perplexed—
Lost in a gloom of uninspired research.

ll. 31, 32. Cf. 'a watchful heart Still couchant, an inevitable eye, And an ear practised like a blind man's touch.' ('When to the attractions,' etc., 1800.)

OLD MAN TRAVELLING (page 117). Composed probably 1797—an overflowing from *The Old Cumberland Beggar*, which was published in the 2nd (2 vol.) ed. of 1800. ll. 15-20 were struck out after 1805.

THE COMPLAINT OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN (page 118). Composed 1798. 'My purpose in these poems is to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature. This object I have endeavoured in these short essays to attain by various means; . . . by accompanying the last struggles of a human being at the approach of death, cleaving in solitude to life and society, as in the poem of the *Forsaken Indian*,' etc. (*Preface*, 1800). Coleridge mentions Hearne's *Journey* in the Prefatory Note to *The Three Graves*, *q.v.* 'Wordsworth does not mention that Hearne tells of a woman left behind by his Indian companions, who three times succeeded in coming up with them. "At length, poor creature! she dropt behind, and no one attempted to go back in search of her." Chap. vii.' (Dowden.)

THE CONVICT (page 122). Probably composed as early as 1793: never reprinted by W. W. 'A thoroughly Godwinian poem, in which the philosopher's favourite idea for the reformation of the penal laws was dramatised. Godwin proposed *colonisation* (*i.e.* transportation) as a substitute for the gallows, adding that "colonists are men for whom we ought to feel no sentiments but those of kindness and compassion"' (cf. last stanza).—Legouis, *op. cit.*, p. 309, note.

ll. 41, 42. This image was revived by the poet in his *Lament of Mary Queen of Scots* (1817), 64-67:

> Hark! the death-note of the year
> Sounded by the castle-clock!
> From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear
> Stole forth, unsettled by the shock, *etc.*

LINES WRITTEN A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ETC. (page 125). Composed Friday, July 13, 1798. 'No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days [Tues. 10th-Frid. 13th July] with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol' (W. W., 1843). 'I have not ventured to call this Poem an Ode; but it was written with a hope that in the transitions, and the impassioned music of the versification, would be found the principal requisites of that species of composition.' *Note*, ed. 1800.

'*Tintern Abbey* is at once a Hymn of Praise, and a Confession of Faith. Nature is extolled for that she still enlarges her bounty to the measure of man's growing needs. "Tis her privilege, through all the years of this our life, to lead from joy to joy.' Already, amid the giddy blisses of his childhood, she spake to her coming poet rememberable things (*Prelude*, i. 588); in the troublous time of youth he found for his uneasy heart, in her mists and winds, her hills and lakes and sounding cataracts, a never-failing principle of joy and purest passion (*Prelude*, ii. 450); and now again in ripening manhood, after a dreary interspace of doubt and distraction, he hails in her 'the anchor of his purest thoughts, the guide and guardian of his heart, and soul of all his moral being.' From her myriad Forms he daily learns the arduous lesson of duty, and obtains strength to fulfil it (*Excursion*, iv. 1230-1274); nay, it is through her that at rare moments he wins access to the very presence of God Himself. True, the dizzy transports of boyhood are gone by: for him to-day the rapture of Creation's hallelujah is stemmed and chastened by

Humanity's cry of lonely anguish,—by 'the fierce confederate storm of sorrow, barricadoed evermore within the walls of cities.' Yet is his cheerful faith unshaken that all which we behold is full of blessings: yet does his song—albeit oft 'with plaintive voice to earth attempered and her deep drawn sighs'—still centre all in joy, and gratitude, and adoring love.

To the Wordsworth of 1798, then, Nature is the plenteous and perennial fount of grace—chastening and healing, purifying and atoning, consoling and uplifting, arousing and illumining. Perhaps it will be enough to add to what has been said the following account of Wordsworth's way of thinking at this date, given by Coleridge to the Unitarian minister Estlin, of Bristol, in May 1798: 'I have now known Wordsworth a year and some months, and my admiration, I might say my awe, of his intellectual powers has increased even to this hour, and (what is of more importance) he is a tried good man. On one subject we are habitually silent; we found our data dissimilar, and never renewed the subject. It is his practice and almost his nature to convey all the truth he knows without any attack on what he supposes falsehood, if that falsehood be interwoven with virtues or happiness. He loves and venerates Christ and Christianity. I wish he did more, but it were wrong indeed if an incoincidence with one of our wishes altered our respect and affection to a man of whom we are, as it were, instructed by our great Master to say that not being against us he is for us.'

l. 106. The words of Young, to which Wordsworth refers in his footnote, occur in *Night Thoughts* (*The Complaint*), vi. 424: 'And half-create the wondrous world they see.'

NOTES TO THE APPENDIX.

PETER BELL (page 138). Composed April-May, 1798. 'William all the morning engaged in wearisome composition. The moon crescent. *Peter Bell* begun.'—Dorothy's *Journal*, April 29, 1798. It was finished before Hazlitt's visit to Coleridge at the close of May or early in June. The story is Wordsworth's, but a few details are based on fact. Wordsworth had read of an ass 'found hanging his head in a wretched posture' over a canal at a spot where, later, his master's corpse was discovered in the water. *Peter's* externals were furnished by a 'wild rover' with whom the poet in 1793 walked along the Wye from Builth to Hay. *Benoni* he had known in his schoolboy days. Wordsworth delighted in studying the ways and humours and physiognomy of the asses which he met in the woods of Alfoxden: this—or so he fancied in 1843—set him upon writing the poem.

The text of the 1st edition (1819) is here reproduced. It is not the text of 1798. We know from Dorothy's Grasmere *Journal* that *Peter Bell* was revised and extended in 1802. We gather from an observation in Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, June 4, 1812, that amongst its personages—the Squire and his daughter Bess, the Vicar and his Dame, Stephen Otter, etc.—the Prologue *then* included one 'Harry the Churchwarden.' Harry's humours were doubtless ultra-Wordsworthian, seeing that the Diarist expected 'to hear this same churchwarden brought up in judgment against the author.' But our text contains an offset to this unquestionable loss in the shape of the famous stanza beginning, 'Is it a party in a parlour,' prefixed by Shelley to his *Peter Bell the Third*. In 1820 it

was removed from the text, Wordsworth says—'though one of the most imaginative in the whole piece—not to offend the pious.' Mrs. Basil Montagu claimed that she had suggested this stanza (ll. 556-560, p. 157) to the poet by relating to him the following anecdote: 'A person, walking in a friend's garden, looking in at a window, saw a company of ladies at a table near the window with countenances *fixed*. In an instant he was aware of their condition, and broke the window. He saved them from incipient suffocation' (Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, June 6, 1812, quoted in Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, ii. 200).

Peter Bell, *The Three Graves*, and *Cain* are here given in an Appendix, because, with the *Ancyent Marinere* and *Harry Gill*, they form a distinct group amongst the poems of 1798. Widely as they differ in form and style, these five poems have a common psychological basis, and may be described as studies in mental pathology. Each in its own fashion illustrates the tremendous effect upon the imagination (and through it upon the physical organism) of a painful *idea* vividly and suddenly impressed upon the mind. The *idea* is the same in all five cases—that of a *curse*, whether innocently (as in *The Three Graves*), or guiltily (as in the other Tales) incurred. The *effect*, in *Cain* and *Peter Bell*, is temporary distraction; in the other Tales, it is permanent insanity, terminating in two instances (*The Three Graves* and *Harry Gill*) in death. One feature in *Peter Bell*, which has never hitherto been pointed out, indicates its close connection with Coleridge's fragmentary *Wanderings of Cain*. Coleridge told Hazlitt, when the two were visiting Lynton and the neighbourhood in June 1798, that Wordsworth and he were to have made the 'Valley of Rocks' the scene of a prose tale, which was to have been in the manner of, but far superior to, Gesner's *Death of Abel*; but that they had relinquished the design. The accuracy of Hazlitt's memory is established by the extant fragment of *Cain* (see p. 193 *sqq.*), in which the scenery—the path winding through the ever-denser fir-forest, its sudden emergence upon the desolate plateau, flanked on either side with bare cliffs—their 'rude mimicry of human concerns—steeples, battlements,' etc.—is largely copied from

the 'Valley of Rocks.'[1] But these are precisely the scenic surroundings which we find in *Peter Bell*, Parts i. and ii.! No doubt Wordsworth places the Tale in Yorkshire, and it is the river Swale, and not the Bristol Channel, that flows beyond the rocks; but it is quite in keeping with Wordsworth's practice thus to mix up names and localities (see note on *Anecdote for Fathers*). In l. 351 *sqq.* we have the thick wood, in which Peter presently is 'buried like a bird darkling. The path grows dimmer and dimmer, till suddenly it terminates in an 'old quarry'—a 'grisly den' of huge rough stones, yawning fissures, and massy shadows—fit scene for 'demoniac power' (l. 514, p. 155) to work in—where (ll. 726-730):

> The rocks that tower on either side
> Build up a wild fantastic scene;
> Temples like those among the Hindoos
> And mosques, and spires, and abbey windows,
> And castles all with ivy green (p. 163).

Here surely we have Southey's 'palace of Pre-adamite kings,' and Coleridge's 'steeples and battlements, and naked shipmasts.' In *Peter Bell*, as in *Harry Gill*, Wordsworth illustrates the truth that 'the power of the human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous' (*Preface*, 1800, p. xxxvi.). Peter,

> Close by a brake of flowering furze,
> . . . sees an unsubstantial creature,
> His very self in form and feature,
> Not four yards from the broad highway;
> And stretch'd beneath the furze he sees . . .

the wraith of his dead Highland wife (p. 171). This is 'the mirage of a moral celenture'—a vision conjured up by those dread Spirits of the Mind—*Sorrow*, *Remorse*, and *Guilty Fear* (ll. 151-155).

[1] Southey describes the place thus: '. . . rock reclining upon rock, stone piled upon stone, a huge and terrific mass. A palace of the Pre-adamite kings, a city of the Anakim, must have appeared so shapeless and yet so like the ruins of what had been shaped, after the waters of the flood subsided.'—*Southey*, by Ed. Dowden, p. 64.

M. Émile Legouis (*Early Life of Wordsworth*, p. 431) compares the dialogue between the poet and his little crescent-boat (*Prologue*, pp. 141-143) to that held by Chaucer with the eagle (*Hous of Fame*, ii. 991-1017). 'How like Chaucer,' he observes, 'is Wordsworth here—yet how different! While Chaucer is humorously conscious of his own limited flight . . . Wordsworth hints that soaring is possible only to those who, lacking due weight of flesh and bone, are unsubstantial and void as phantoms. Far from envying Coleridge [the 'ambitious Youth' of l. 133], Wordsworth is inclined to attribute his friend's airy voyages to a want of the sinews and muscles whose very burden incapacitates man from spiritual excursions, and of those feelings which form so many strong links to bind a man to earth.'

THE THREE GRAVES (page 179). Composed 1798. Parts i. and ii. were found among Coleridge's MSS., and are printed in the late James Dykes Campbell's edition of the Poems (Macmillan, 1893). They are fragmentary, and lack distinction. Parts iii. and iv. were first printed in *The Friend*, No. vi., September 21, 1809. The prose introduction belongs to this date, with the exception of the opening paragraph, which belongs to 1817 (*Sibylline Leaves*). *The Three Graves* is the only one of Coleridge's poems that could have been fairly cited to prove the coincidence of its author's judgment with Wordsworth's on the question of poetic diction; this is why Coleridge is careful to warn the reader (1817) that the piece is presented not as Poetry, but as a common Ballad-Tale. He tries to guard himself against the suspicion of complicity in Wordsworth's revolutionary views, but without success. 'This very poem was selected, notwithstanding the preface, as a proof of my judgment and poetic diction, and a fair specimen of the style of my poems generally (see the *Mirror*); nay! the very words of the preface were used, omitting the *not*, etc.'—*MS. Note in Mr. Samuel's copy of* Sibylline Leaves, *printed in* The Poetry of S.T. Coleridge (*Muses' Library*), ed. R. Garnett, C.B., LL.D., p. 314.

The Three Graves was the only thing in *The Friend* that was 'generally praised and enquired after' (S. T. C. to

Pool, October 9, 1809). It was reprinted as 'a modern ballad of the very first rank' in *The British Minstrel*, a collection of ballad-verse published at Glasgow in 1821. It is indeed a notable success: Coleridge here meets and fairly vanquishes Wordsworth on Wordsworth's own ground. 'The garrulity of [the sexton] is almost as realistic as that of [the retired skipper of *The Thorn*], and quite as realistic as any form of serious poetry will properly allow: but it is not crude, it is not repulsive, and it is not tedious: it has nothing but what is merely external in common with such a poem as *The Thorn*' (SWINBURNE: *Miscellanies*, p. 140).

ll. 225-258. 'The spring was late uncommonly,' etc. This helps to fix the date of composition. The Spring in 1798 advanced very slowly (Dorothy's *Journal*, March 20, 24; April 6) until Easter Day, April 8, after which, Dorothy records, 'the Spring advances rapidly' (April 1, 12). On April 12, Wordsworth writes to Cottle: 'Within these few days the season has advanced with greater rapidity than I ever remember.' Easter Day, says Dorothy, was 'oppressively warm.' Cf. ll. 257, 258: 'And then the hot days, all at once, They came, we knew not how.' Cf. *Christabel*, ll. 21, 22; and Southey's Sonnet, composed 1798, published in *Annual Anthology* (1799) p. 138:

> 'Thou lingerest, Spring! still wintry is the scene;
> The fields their dead and sapless russet wear:
> Scarce does the glossy pilewort yet appear
> Starring the sunny bank,' etc.

(Southey's reference here is probably the earliest notice in verse of the small celandine, pilewort or figwort, *Ranunculus ficaria*, celebrated in two songs by Wordsworth, April 30, May 1, 1802.)

ll. 261-280. The 'woody dell' here described lies at the bottom of Alfoxden grove, a quarter of a mile from the House. See *Ancyent Marinere*, ll. 358-361, *note*.

THE WANDERINGS OF CAIN (page 193). Planned, and probably written, 1798. For the scenery, which is that of the 'Valley of Rocks' near Lynton, on the Bristol Channel, see

Peter Bell, note. In the *Athenæum* of January 27, 1894, p. 114, 'E. H. C.' prints some rough drafts or preparatory studies of *Cain*, from one of which it is clear that Coleridge had for a time thought of shaping the poem as a narrative addressed by Cain to his wife:

'Midnight on the Euphrates. Cedars, palms, pines. Cain discovered sitting on the upper part of the ragged rock, where is cavern overlooking the Euphrates, the moon rising on the horizon. His soliloquy. The Beasts are out on the ramp—he hears the scream of a woman and children. Cain, surrounded by tigers, makes a soliloquy debating whether he shall save the woman. Cain advances, wishing death, and the tigers rush off. It proves to be Cain's wife with her two children, determined to follow her husband. She prevails upon him at last to tell his story. Cain's wife tells him that her son Enos was placed suddenly by her side. Cain addresses all the elements to cease for a while to persecute him, while he tells his story. He begins by telling her that he had first after his leaving her found out a dwelling in the desart under a juniper tree, etc., etc., how he meets in the desart a young man whom upon a nearer approach he perceives to be Abel, on whose countenance appear marks of the greatest misery . . . of another being who had power after this life, greater than Jehovah. He is going to offer sacrifices to this being, and persuades Cain to follow him—he came to an immense gulph filled with water, whither they descend, followed by alligators, etc. They come to an immense meadow so surrounded as to be inaccessible, and from its depth so vast that you could not see it from above. Abel offers sacrifice from the blood of his arm. A gleam of light illumines the meadow—the countenance of Abel becomes more beautiful and his arms glistering—he then persuades Cain to offer sacrifice for himself and his son Enos by cutting his child's arm and letting the blood fall from it. Cain is about to do it when Abel himself in his angelic appearance, attended by Michael, are seen in the heavens, whence they sail slowly down. Abel addresses Cain with terror, warning him not to offer up his innocent child. The evil spirit throws off the countenance of Abel, assumes his own shape, flies off,

pursuing a flying battle with Michael. Abel carries off the child.'

It would seem from this sketch that Abel, after he has rescued Enos from the psuedo-Abel, miraculously conveys him to his mother's side. Another fragment, too long for insertion here, exhibits Cain as tempted and persuaded to burn out his own eyes by way of expiation to the true deity. Cain first ascends the rocks to take a farewell of the earth. Here he suddenly abandons his resolution, and turning round to declare this to his tempter—a fiery human shape—'he sees him dancing from rock to rock . . . down those interminable precipices.'

Canto ii. of *The Wanderings of Cain* was first printed, without verses or prefatory note, in the *Bijou* for 1828. The verses had appeared in a note to the *Conclusion* of *Aids to Reflection* (1825, p. 383). Prefatory note, verses, and Canto ii. appear together in Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, 1828.

LEWTI (page 202). Composed probably 1794; first printed in *Morning Post*, April 13, 1798, with the signature *Nicius Erythræus*, 'the pseudonym assumed in the seventeenth century by J. V. Rossi, the author of the delightful *Pinacotheca Imaginum illustrium virorum*' (GARNETT). *Lewti* was to have been included in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798, but at the last moment the sheet containing it was cancelled and *The Nightingale* substituted. A few early copies contained *Lewti* (see W. Hale White's *Description of the Longman MSS.*, p. 35, *note*). A copy of *L. B.*, from Southey's library, with the earlier contents table and *Lewti* bound in, is now in the British Museum. It is from this copy that the text of *Lewti* is here reprinted.

ll. 69, 70. Altered, in deference to Lamb—*Letters* (Ainger) i. 121; *The Lambs*, etc. (W. C. Hazlitt), p. 100—to

> Voice of the Night! had I the power
> That leafy labyrinth to thread
> And creep, like thee, with soundless tread, *etc.*

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

ANCYENT MARINERE. l. 83. I give what seems the likeliest meaning of *weft* in this line; but *waif* (=*waft*, *weft*, *wheft*) is used by whalemen in another sense. With them 'a mast-head waif' is 'a light pole six or eight feet long, with a hoop covered with canvas at the end': this is used in signalling boats. *E.g.*: 'The officer who first discovers it [the whale] sets a *waif* in his boat, and gives chase.'—C. M. SCAMMON, *Marine Mammals*, page 25 (*Cent. Dict.*, *s.v.* 'waif'). The word does not occur in Captain James's *Strange and Dangerous Voyage*, nor does he say anything about sunsets; but he notes in his *Journal* 'The 21st January 1632 I observed the sun to rise like an oval along the horizon. I call'd three or four to see it, the better to confirm my judgment; and we all agreed that it was twice as long as it was broad. We plainly perceived withal that by degrees as it gate up higher it also recovered its roundness.' The three distinct words *waff* or *waft* (wave), *weft* (weave), and *waif* (waive) appear to have been continually mistaken for each other during the last three or four centuries; and indeed we may add a fourth to the group, the mimetic word *whiff*. Cf. 'Mr. Geo. Barclay got a *waff* of that murthering East-Wind' (Walker's *Remark. Passages*, p. 159): 'the strongest sort of smells are best in a *weft* afar off' (BACON, in *Johnson's Dict.*). *Waff* in the sense of *wraith* (=*whiff*, *spiritus*) occurs in *Dangerous Secrets*, ii. 163. Mr. W. E. Henley (*London Voluntaries*, No. iii.) uses *waft* in the sense of 'a stray gleam':

> The day not dies, but seems
> Dispersed in wafts and drifts of gold, *etc.*

ll. 201-203. Mr. Hale White (*Longman MSS.*, p. 33) refers to this passage as though it exemplified that careless observation of the common appearances of the sky which is so frequent in the poets and novelists. 'A star almost atween the tips of the horned Moon' he deems an impossible image. He adds that when a horned moon climbs the eastern bar, it is always in broad daylight. This latter stricture is irrefragable; but in reply to the former may we not urge that (1) there is great virtue in an *almost*; and (2) that it is the business of poetry to represent things 'not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses* and to the *passions*' (WORDSWORTH, *Essay Supplementary to Preface*, 1815). To be sure, the line introduced in 1817, 'within the nether tip,' must be given up to Mr. Hale White. The exquisite minutenesses of Coleridge's observations might be shown by quotations from *The Picture*, *Dejection*, and other poems, as well as from those wonderful descriptions of the skyscape written down during the *nuits blanches* of 1802-3; (*Anima Poetæ*, pp. 18-52). But of course Coleridge had not the *vast store* of precise images which Wordsworth had accumulated from the days of boyhood. See, for the reason, *Prelude*, vi. 263-273. *Dulce est inter amicos rarissima dissensione condere plurimas consentiones.*

THE NIGHTINGALE. l. 60. The mimetic words 'jug, jug' here were probably taken from the verses in John Skelton's *Crown of Laurell* addressed to 'Maistres Isabell Pennell.' We quote the closing lines only:

It were an hevenly helthe,
It were an endlesse welthe,
A lyfe for God himselfe,
To here this nyghtyngale,
Amonge the byrdes smale,
Warbelynge in the vale
Dug, dug, jug, jug,
Good yere and good lucke
With chucke, chucke, chucke, chucke.

'Jug, jug' also occurs in Gascoigne's *Complaint of Philomene*, in Lyly's *Campaspe*, and T. Nash's *Spring, the Sweet Spring!*

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS (page 63). A friendly critic observes, à propos of my statement that 'the purport of this ballad is somewhat obscure': 'To me it has not seemed obscure. I have always considered the moral to be that you should not press a child for *reasons* which he could not give. You must be satisfied with what is spontaneously offered. I often call this poem to mind when, for instance, a sensitive woman pronounces her liking or disliking for anybody. If you urge her for reasons you will get Kilve's weathercock.—Nay, more, I often apply the moral to myself accepting monitions, presentiments, instinctive prepossessions, which I cannot logically justify.'

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